

- THE SOLITARY OBELISK -

The Significance of Cult in Hierapolis of Phrygia

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Cover illustration: The Solitary obelisk seen from the back (northeast) where the collapsed, triangular pillar parts are to be found. A view on the Lykos valley (photograph by Anne Nyquist 2011).

“The universe is either a confusion, and a mutual involution of things, and a dispersion; or it is unity and order and providence. If then it is the former, why do I desire to tarry in a fortuitous combination of things and such a disorder? And why do I care about anything else than how I shall at last become earth? And why am I disturbed, for the dispersion of my elements will happen whatever I do. But if the other supposition is true, I venerate, and I am firm, and I trust in him who governs”

(Marcus Aurelius, The *Meditations*, book six).

In memory of my father, Peter Nyquist (8/8/1938 - 7/5/2002)
and my mother in law, Anna Renna (11/4/1940 - 22/10/2014)

Acknowledgements

One evening in May my daughter Julia asked me if we could watch the sun set together. My first thought was that I didn't have time, but on second thought I realized that certain requests are not turned down. We had only a few minutes before the sun would set, and we ran down an alley of trees, up along a field's edge to reach the Viking burial mounds of Stavhella. We got there just in time to see the sun set in the west, and Julia said: "Mamma, it is fantastic!". And I could tell that she was right.

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Abbreviations

Anth.Pal/Anth.Gr: The Palatine Anthology/The Greek Anthology

CIG = Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum

EAA = European Association of Archaeologists

IGR = Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes

IHierapP = Iscrizioni Hierapolis Pennacchietti

IK = Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien

SEG = Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

Tables are found in the appendices 2-4. **Religious and political offices and other terms and expressions**, marked in italics in the text, are explained in the wordlist (appendix 1).

References to classical works and **abbreviations** are done according to *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4. ed.)

The author's remarks

There are not many certainties when it comes to the tombowner of the Hierapolitan obelisk. The only assumption that can be made with quite some certainty, is that he was a wealthy person. But was he only rich? Without an inscription and the top stone of the Solitary obelisk, it is impossible to ascertain the identity of the tombowner or his specific cultic affiliation. Nevertheless, it is possible to make hypotheses based on other tomb characteristics. Such hypotheses are presented in this work.

This study turned out to be a study not only of tombs, but of Graeco-Roman religion, cult and administration, as well. Cult, and particularly mystery cult, is admittedly a difficult field of research, where the epigraphic and archaeological material in itself is secretive by nature. Besides the differences between such cults are often vague, since they frequently share traits, both in *content* (religious ideas and memory) and *form* (the way the content is ritualized)¹. It is therefore necessary to underline that the propositions of this work depend on many assumptions that in their own right may be wrong, or only partly correct. The inferences of this work, then, are not verifiable, but the assumptions made are based on the study of a considerable amount of subject-specific literature which, at least to the author, quite convincingly point in an similar cultic direction. Nevertheless, the assumptions and propositions made, are done with cautious reservations.

Three monumental, pyramidal tombs constitute my primary material. In addition to the Solitary obelisk, there are two analogous tombs in Nikaia, north-west in Asia Minor. The Solitary- and the Philiskos obelisk, and possibly the Sacerdos obelisk, are not really obelisks, since their geometrical form is that of a *tetrahedron*, a triangular pyramid. They are nevertheless called obelisks throughout this study, since that has been their denomination since the Medieval ages.

In this work the tomb owner is presented as a man. The tomb may in fact belong to a woman, or to a married couple, as does the Sacerdos obelisk of Nikaia. Still, since the two Nikaian tombs of my primary material first and foremost are of men, and since religio-political offices in the Graeco-Roman world were held mostly by men, it is my choice to consider the tomb owner as a man.

¹ For a presentation of the concepts *content* and *form*, see Brandt (2012:139-198).

1 BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

Hierapolis of Phrygia (Asia Minor) is situated on a calcareous platform some 350 metres above sea level, on the western brink of the Anatolian plateau. It covers an area of ca. 800.000 m² and has an extension of about one km on a NW-SE axis. Founded by Seleucid kings, Hierapolis of Phrygia came to be an important trade junction of the Meander valley in antiquity (fig.1). A thriving wool production was part of the trading network which connected the eastern and the western world (Arthur 2012:275; D'Andria 2001:97).

The city looks out on the fertile Lykos river valley, where Hierapolis, with the neighbouring cities of Laodikea and Kolossae, were a focus of New Testament texts in the 1st century AD, since some of the earliest Christian communities were to be found in these cities (Huttner 2013:24). Hierapolis literally meant 'the Holy City', but this denomination was not due to the Christian congregation, which during the first centuries AD was a persecuted group. Rather, the many rich pagan cults had earned the city its reputation. Hierapolis was originally centered on a cult connected with the Phrygian Kybele; the Great Mother goddess of mountains and caves and of birth, death and rebirth. Her cult area, in use perhaps as early as the 7th-6th centuries BC (Piccardi and Masse 2007:98; Ritti 1985:137; 2006:132) has been found in connection with the newly discovered *Plutonion* (D'Andria 2013). An earthquake fault runs through the sacred center of the city, and Strabo (XIII, 4, 14) describes how, from a crack in the ground, poisonous gasses oozed out to choke sacrificial bulls. This practice endured into the 3rd century AD, probably in syncretism with a Graeco-Roman cult connected with the rape of Kore (Persephone) (D'Andria 2013:173, 191, 191 note 73; Ritti 2006:130-133). In the 1st century AD, the sanctuary of Apollo was placed near another gaseous well 70-80 m NW of the *Plutonion*, thus defining the area which was to become the cultic centre of the Roman city. In the peak period of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, Hierapolis, apart from being a prosperous trade-centre, was a considerable centre for religious affairs. Local cult and Roman official cult, like that of the emperor (Ando 2000:102, 177-178; Ferguson 2003:44-45; Price 1984) worked side by side on their different levels in cities of Asia Minor. So also in Hierapolis, where the imperial cult was practiced in the sanctuary of the town's patron deity, Apollo (Burrell 2004:135-136; D'Andria 2013:191; Price 1984:91, 264; Ritti 2003:186-188, 214 fig. 4, 5a, 5b).

In this city of economic riches and religious diversity, an extraordinary, triangular tomb of impressive size, is situated high up above the city (fig.2, 3, 6). It is placed in the northern

periphery of the north-eastern necropolis, marking the upper end of a steep hillside, overlooking what was the north theatre. It is referred to as an obelisk tomb. Its' epithet 'Tomba del Solitario,' speaks of its solitary placing at a distance from other tomb structures, and maybe also of its uniqueness in form. Placed, as the Solitary obelisk is, relatively high up in the terrain, its position provides a splendid panorama of the city and the Lykos valley below. The monumental tomb was likewise clearly visible from the city. In that respect it was simultaneously part of the city and detached from it. Two 'obelisk'-tombs in Nikaia (Bithynia), the Philiskos-tomb and the Sacerdos-tomb, are the only other confirmed tombs of this kind in Roman Asia Minor. The Philiskos-tomb is still standing, while the Sacerdos-tomb is documented only through the tomb-inscription. The Philiskos obelisk was originally ca. 12 meters tall, and the Solitary obelisk ca. 15 meters tall. A similar height is probable for the Sacerdos obelisk. These three tombs constitute the main material of my study.

1.2 Research history

The most comprehensive and thorough works on monumental tombs in the Mediterranean area, are written by Fedak (1990), Hesberg (1992) and Toynbee (1971). Fedak establishes a typology of main tomb forms and explores the variations of form that resulted from differences in climate, building materials, and social and religious customs. Hesberg considers the social significance of Roman monumental tombs. He especially focuses on tombs as a means of 'Selbstdarstellung' of the tomb owner. Toynbee likewise examines Roman funeral practices and tomb types from a wide variety of perspectives. With a more delimiting approach, Triebel (2004) deals thoroughly with the use of the term *nefesh* for denoting a tomb-monument, and the use of the pyramid as a distinct feature of tomb architecture. He considers the pyramidal form in relation to its symbolical and eschatological implications. Cormack (2004) and Berns (2003) more specifically concentrate on funerary monuments of Asia Minor. Cormack aims to convey the impact that tomb spaces in Roman Asia Minor had on its citizenry, and how the space of the dead converged with civic space. In his thorough work, Berns aims to ascertain design patterns of early Imperial tombs and examine their relationship to their environment. He considers the tomb of the Solitary in relation to its position and to its period of construction. Berns (2005) also gives an account of the character and period of the Tripod tomb at Knidos, excavated and documented by Newton (1863) in the 19th century. For monumental composite tombs particularly in the Roman province of Pontus and Bithynia, Graef (1892) and Coulton (2005) describe the local use of altars as pedestals. In her overview of different tomb types in

Hierapolis, Ronchetta (1999) describes the same phenomenon of *bomoi* as support for sarcophagi.

“La Missione Archeologica Italiana a Hierapolis (MAIER)” started excavations in Hierapolis in 1957, and since then they have brought large parts of the city to the surface. Consequently thorough reports covering the different excavation-periods and publications on particular characteristics of the town have been issued, from Hellenistic times until the Byzantine period (D'Andria 1987; D'Andria and Caggia 2007; D'Andria and Ismaelli 2012; D'Andria, et al. 2008). Excavation of central buildings such as the theatre, the temple of Apollo, the agora and the baths, has given information on the nature and the dimensions of Hierapolis in the Roman period of the town. Valuable information on religion, cult, trade and administration is given from inscriptions in the city and on tombs in the necropoleis. Architectural and archaeological observations on the town and the necropoleis have been subject to a long series of studies (D'Andria 2001: 94-115, 2003, 2013; Ritti 1983, 1988, 1989 a, 1989 b, 2006; Ronchetta 1999; Berns 2003: 159,162; Schneider Equini 1972; Semeraro 2012; Vanhaverbeke and Waelkens 2003; Verzone 1972, 1978).

The Tomb of the Solitary is documented as a Roman ‘tomb of a particular type’ (Verzone 1978:412-417), and has been described from an architectural viewpoint by Ronchetta (2008:79) For the east necropolis as a whole, Ahrens (2011) discusses the placing of the tombs with regard to the quality of having a tomb with a view. Reports from the Norwegian excavations in the eastern necropolis (Ahrens and Brandt 2007-2010) date the different tombs and tomb complexes of the East necropolis, and indicate a chronological frame for the work with the Solitary obelisk, as part of the same funerary area.

The Nikaian tombs have been subject to studies by Schneider (1943), Merkelbach and Stauber (2001) and Bekker-Nielsen (2008). Schneider describes the Philiskos tomb architecturally, with an account of form and typology. Merkelbach and Stauber make suggestions as to cultic affiliation and societal status for the tomb owners. Sahin (1978:15-17) and Bekker-Nielsen (2008:109-114) give a socio-political and religio-historical background account of the milieu in which the Philiscos tomb was built, and a thorough documentation of the Cassius family as part of Nikaian elite in the Roman era.

1.3 Problem statement

The three obelisk tombs of Asia Minor were built far from the geographical birthplace of such monuments, since obelisks and pyramids originated as ancient Egyptian sacred objects. Such

monuments have always been associated with power, but have represented different sorts of power depending on the situation. In each place and time they have taken on new meanings (Curran 2009:7-8). Alongside the pyramid, the obelisk is among the most characteristic of Egyptian monuments, essentially bearing a cultic significance (Iversen 1968:11). This project will start with three presumptions:

- Obelisks and pyramids are cultic objects bearing administrative significance on several levels in society.
- In ancient society there was little or no separation between the secular and the religious spheres (Dignas 2002; Meyer 2002; Várhelyi 2010) and cult must therefore, at least partly, be considered a political tool.
- Cult as a political tool is understood as the use of ritual as structuring, imposing a definition of the world, which supports and legitimizes political rule (Price 1984:248).

The main aim of this project is to examine the politico-religious significance that the obelisk may have had on more levels in society. To which degree is it comparable with the two obelisk tombs of Nikaia, and to which degree are they comparable to the larger mediterranean material of pyramidal, monumental tombs. The work intends at examining whether these tombs share a similar cultic content and whether the triangular form further may convey a common significance of an as yet unknown tradition. Merkelbach and Stauber (2001) and Bekker-Nielsen (2008) have suggested that the Nikaian tombs imply sacral rule on more administrative levels of the empire. Therefore this project comparatively will examine whether the solitary obelisk and its owner may represent the same kind of rule. In order to consider the tomb of the Solitary's religious significance in society, it is necessary to cast light on how religion and cult influenced on and worked within power and decision-making in Hierapolis. Cult and rule worked on different levels, but also as an inextricable whole. The significance of the obelisk tomb will be considered within the discussion of the problems stated below:

- To what degree do pyramidal tomb markers share a common symbolism, and is this symbolism and its societal connotations transferable upon the obelisks of Asia Minor?
- The Nikaian obelisks were of men of the elite with imperial connections. The project will consider the nature of official Emperor's cult and its presence and influence in Hierapolis, in order to evaluate the possibility of the Solitary obelisk as an expression of such cult.
- The study aims to map local cults and the nature of these. Did religion and cult enter into administration of the city and of the empire? Was cultic display integrated into urban 'space'? To which degree did cultic officials enter into the political administration of the

city and what was the nature of the cultic elite? Can the obelisk, and its cultic significance, be related to the religious administration of town?

- Within the city of Hierapolis, how does the Solitary tomb relate to physical, and possibly metaphysical or imaginary space, and what may these relations imply when it comes to the identity and nature of the tomb owner? Was his tomb simply a personal display of 'greatness' to enhance a singular member of community, or did the larger community benefit from the legitimacy to power that it conveyed? How was the death cult of the owner administered? What role could such a tomb owner, and such a tomb, have had in society?

1.4 Methodical approach and theoretical framework

The solitary obelisk itself, and its context, is both the starting point for my questions and my prime source of information. In order to answer the questions of my problem statement, an archaeological survey and examination of the obelisk-tomb and the surroundings gives the information needed to understand the tomb better in its own right, but also to compare its characteristics with other pyramid- and obelisk tombs. Central to the comparative method I choose to apply, are the two obelisk tombs of Nikaia. Despite the architectural uniqueness of the three Anatolian tombs, part of their cultic meaning should be possible to detect through analyses of the symbolic language of similar monuments in the Mediterranean world. Therefore a comparison with a selection of other such tombs, serves to unveil possible common characteristics which may give answers to the questions of my problem statement.

The all-comprising comparison consists in an analysis of alleged common characteristics for all pyramidal tombs postulated by Triebel (2004:277, 278, 295) based on a theory of Hermann (1964:130-134). Hermann (1964:132) claims that there is a common symbology connected to the use of the pyramidal form in the Mediterranean area of Hellenistic and Roman times. Triebel (2004:295) recognizes a belief pattern similar to that of Egypt, where the form originated. According to Triebel this might be equally valid for North African, Phoenician and even Semitic pyramidal tombs (Triebel 2004:277-278, 295). Hermann (1964:130-134) claims that the pyramid:

- 1) Includes solar light/the sun.
- 2) Served as an instrument of soul-ascent.
- 3) Was considered as the optimal grave of the sacral rulers.

- 4) Played an important role in mathematics and philosophy.
- 5) Is tied to a discussion especially among Pythagoreans and Hermetic writers, about which human values a universal understanding of the world implies (Triebel 2004:278).

In my presentation of the material, descriptions are not solely archaeological and architectural. I search to reveal the symbolical and societal connotations which may have been connected with the tombs and their owners, in order to allow a well-founded and reliable examination of the common characteristics proposed by Hermann and Triebel. The analysis of the all-encompassing comparison forms the basis for the more narrowly focused analysis of the three obelisks of Asia Minor.

The complexity of questions raised by the Solitary obelisk tomb will need complex theoretical procedures. Therefore Hermann and Triebel's study represents a theoretical framework, while other theories are applied when appropriate. The theoretical approaches shall be unveiled one by one in the analytical part of this study. They can, in the spirit of materiality studies (Glørstad and Hedeager 2008), be described as follows:

Merkelbach (1987) and Merkelbach and Stauber (2001) have postulated theories of cultic affiliation for the two Nikaian obelisks, and these will subsequently be considered for all three obelisks in chapters 4.4 and 6.1.5. For the Hierapolitan obelisk, the postulations suggested for the Nikaian tombs, enter into a larger consideration of probable cultic affiliation for the tomb, where they are evaluated within the discussion of predominant cults in Hierapolis.

Still, the particular placing of the Hierapolitan tomb, further requires specific approaches for the Solitary obelisk. Theories of sacred planning in cityscape (Eliade 1974; Rapoport 1982; Smith 2007) and of landscape architecture (Gansum, et al. 1997), presented primarily in chapters 5.1 and 5.4, will thus be applied. Landscape architecture is here considered as an intentional ordering of the cityscape according to a cultural logic (Barnard and Spencer 2011:679), and such a theoretical angle allows me to analytically examine the tomb's relation to spaces, or 'rooms' of the city, as well as to other monumental and politico-religious buildings.

The tomb's place in the cityscape will then tentatively be seen in relation with the specific religio-political situation of Hierapolis. In presenting and discussing the religio-political context, different theories are referred to. They overarch the ideas presented and underlie the arguments of the analysis. Within the discussion of cult and religion as a force in politics, Varhelyi (2010) examines the connection between political and religious power in the pagan

Roman empire, while Dignas (2002) explores the close interaction of power and administration, which ties rulers, cities and sanctuaries together. Price (1984) observes the same mechanisms specifically for the imperial cult.

Barnard and Spencer (2011) claim a cultural logic to any observable manmade phenomenon, and I search to grasp part of that logic through reference to theories of structural anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1977) and Strauss (1966). Lévi-Strauss claims that early societies created meaning and organization through the expression of binary opposition in myth, so as to make an equilibrium between the conflicting duality they observed in nature and in man. Strauss sees such reconciliation of opposites in Orphic poetry.

Religious philosophy gradually got a more pronounced place in this study. Because of the obelisk's form as that of a Platonic body, Platonism was a natural philosophical orientation to concentrate on. Classical Greek scholarship of the 19th century generally recognised, and gave due weight, to the influence of Orphism upon Plato. The critical trend within early 20th century scholarship, however, was to downplay Orphic movement within the archaic and early classical periods of Greek history. McNicholl (2003) and scholars like Edmonds (2004, 2011, 2013), McGahey (1994), Herrero de Jauregui (2010) and Guthrie (1993) revive Orphism within Platonic thought. In this study I tentatively support this recent acknowledgement of the connection between Orphism and Plato, without excluding the possibility of other cultic significance for the obelisk tomb and its owner.

2 THE TRIANGULAR OBELISKS OF ASIA MINOR

Three so-called obelisk tombs of Asia Minor constitute the primary material of the project. All three probably belong to the same period of Roman rule. Two, the Philiskos- and the Sacerdos-tomb are situated in Nikaia (Bithynia) and one – the primary focus of this study – the Solitary tomb, is to be found in Hierapolis (Phrygia). A third possible Nikaian obelisk tomb, of a man called Achaios, is described as shining / bright / glowing / luminous (leuchtende) in height, or as *ὕψιφαῖ*, ‘what is tall from a distance’ (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:164, 09/05/09 note 4; Paton 1916 *Anth. Pal.* VII, 701). Other than the short inscription, there are no other traces of the tomb, and it will not be further presented in this study.

All there remains of the Sacerdos obelisk, is a long inscription of five stanzas. Since the text gives information on the tomb as a monument, on the tomb owners and their position in society, and on cult, cosmology and mythology related to the tomb, it is considered suitable to give a philological analysis of the inscription here in the material chapter. The Philiskos tomb will be examined to reveal the same kind of information. The interpretation of societal and cultic connotations are presented in this chapter, but they primarily serve for the later comparison and evaluation of common symbolism and cultic significance. For the Solitary obelisk, all such considerations will be done in the analysis chapter.

2.1 The Solitary Obelisk as a monument

The Solitary tomb is placed high up, 0° north of temple C of the Apollo sanctuary, above the ruins of the northern theater, on a valley shoulder framing the hillside northwards (fig.4). The Apollo sanctuary and the obelisk are a little less than 1 km apart. The tomb has not been dated. However, the coarse style of the façade is, according to Berns, typical of the High Empire in Roman Asia Minor (Berns 2003:168, n. 285) (fig.8). Its resemblance to the two Nikaian obelisk tombs that are datable to the 2nd century AD, legitimates an assumption that the Hierapolitan obelisk was built in that same century (Ahrens 2011:102-103). Hesberg (1992:120) states that bizarre shapes gained significance in the Eastern necropoleis during the 2nd century AD. Further, more authors claim an isolated placing for tombs as a trend of that same century (Ahrens 2011:99; Berns 2003:156, 159-163; Hesberg 1992:51; Köse 2005:132). Berns (2003:159) observes that even when an area or a spot in the territory of the necropolis was chosen, an isolated place was sought. Additionally, the Hierapolitan tombs with a view, are predominantly from the late 1st to the 2nd century AD (Ahrens 2011:101-103; Sven Ahrens, personal communication 2014). The monument, triangular in shape, was built in local

travertine and composed of a funerary chamber, a foundation for a pillar base and a high triangular pillar. Since the pillar fell backwards, up-hill in a northeasterly direction, the lower façade of the tomb is not damaged. The funerary chamber, the base of the pillar and the lower parts of the pillar itself, are intact, measuring 3,70 m in height. Part of the pillar, lying on the ground as a series of fallen dominos shaped as Toblerone chocolates, is preserved (fig.15). A reconstruction based on the remaining parts of the pillar, gives a total height of ca. 15 m (fig.3, 6).

The roof of the chamber is part of a triangular foundation for the pillar base (fig.5, 9). The sides of the foundation are 5,05 m long. Each side of the base consists of a bench 4,5 m in length, a plinth and a succession of scotia and torus 3,45 m in length. The pillar rests on the base. The parts of the pillar have been accurately shaped in order to form a prolonged pyramidal shape. The sides of the lowest part of the pillar measure 3,03 m. The collapsed Toblerone-shaped slabs, slightly varying in measure, constitute the middle part of the pillar (fig. 15). The sides of what is probably the penultimate stone, measure 1,08 m (fig.18). The slabs and blocks seem to have been kept down by their own weight, but blocks towards the top were clamped together, as evidenced from the clamp holes (figs.16-18).

The funerary chamber, located under the pillar base, is a hypogeum. The tomb entrance is 0,80 m high and 0,60 m wide (fig.12), orientated in a southwesterly direction. On the protruding slab, which makes out the door lintel, there is a cut space, either for a stele or for a closing device of the door (seen from above on fig.10). The access to the chamber was barred by at least one door. This is evidenced by holes for a lock, deep cuttings and remaining metal on the protruding blocks of the entrance (fig.12, 13). The irregular room is partly dug out into the bedrock and without benches. Massive and roughly cut stones make up the walls. On the southern chamber blocks, there are blackish marks (fig.11). The chamber is approximately 2,40 m deep, 1,45 m wide and 1,5 m high, with the stone rubble removed.

In front of the chamber there is a 2,14 m wide enclosure, surrounded by a mixed masonry brick wall. The use is of a later period. During survey of the tomb in the 1960s, parts of marble- and stone capitals and columns were found in front of the funerary chamber. The marble capital was decorated with a stretched egg-and-dart pattern, and of the two marble columns, one was spirally fluted (fig.19), while the other was undecorated. One capital of stone was also found (D'Andria, et al. 2008:79 and Donatella Ronchetta, personal communication 2012). Some of these elements are still in the enclosure and in the area (fig.20).

Immediately southwest of the tomb, there is a rectangular area marked by a mural structure of approximately 30x20 m. It is probably of the Byzantine or Ottoman period (Scardozi

2008:79). Protruding elements of the wall still stick up from the soil, and some parts seem originally to have belonged to Roman structures. Some 20 m west of the tomb, by the northernmost long side of the mural structure, a base of an altar (0,20m high) was found (fig.21, 22). The altar itself, where inscriptions regularly were to be found, is missing. The base lay exposed on the ground, but displaced and turned over, typically as from a collapse and/or from later disturbance. This is representative for several of the scattered elements in the surroundings of the tomb (fig.14, 19, 37). Southeast of the monument there is a monolithic basin of an olive press. It is unfinished and has never been in use.

We do not know the whereabouts of the top stone, but the smallest confirmed block belonging to the obelisk (fig.18), was found 19,5 m west of the tomb. This may be the top stone, supporting an ornament or a pyramidion. If so, the top stone/pyramidion has been fastened with a clamp. The block below the penultimate stone, would be the stone which is now placed on top of the monument (fig.16). This block has a *minimum* side-length of 1,08 m., while the stone 19,5 m to the west of the tomb, has a *maximum* side-length of 1,08 m. The cuts in both blocks seem to be compatible with each other, which may mean that they were damaged contemporaneously (fig.17). Whether they were superimposed, can only be ascertained by joining the two blocks, to see if the position of the clamp holes fit.

Despite uncut bosses and an unfinished torus, this is far from an unsophisticated tomb. It is refined in the details of the façade and in the elaboration of the triangular form. The construction is complicated. Apart from the elaborated façade of the base, the pillar itself has been built in a pattern of cut stones made to fit each other perfectly, as dimensions diminish towards the top. On what is still intact of the pillar, there are cuts to make a trapezoid block fit in, to complete the triangle. This system of massive blocks closing the triangles has continued for at least 2,2 m up the pillar, probably more. Further up flatter, monolithic triangles appear. Where necessary, these triangular blocks have been cut, to fit other cut slabs, in order to get triangles of perfect size and shape (fig.15)

2.2 The Sacerdos obelisk

The sepulchral inscription of Sacerdos was on the monument, written in Doric Greek. It was copied from the obelisk, in Nikaia, by the lake and referred in the Palatine Anthology, a document of an early Byzantine date (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159; Paton 1916 *Anth. Gr.* 09/05/04-08; *Anth. Pal.* XV4-8). At some point in time after this documentation, the monument collapsed or was demolished. Sacerdos' role as representative at the Panhellenia dates his death to 131/132 at the earliest (Brunet 1997:137). Sacerdos most probably died after 137, though,

which more authors convincingly claim was the year when the festival was added to Athens' religious calendar (Kelly 2006:64, 140; Longfellow 2012:134; Oliver 1970:126). The obelisk was placed at Nikaia, near lake Ascania (now lake Iznik) (09/05/04,06). The inscription may indicate an intramural location.

The inscription gives three kinds of information:

- The Sacerdos obelisk as a monument
- The tomb owners and their position in society
- Cult, cosmology and mythology

ἐπιτύμβιον ἐν Νικαίᾳ πλησίον τῆς λίμνης ἐν τῷ ὀβελίσκῳ

Αὔχῃσον, Νίκαια, τὸν οὐρανομάκεα τύμβον,
καὶ τὰν ἀελίῳ γείτονα πυραμίδα:
ἃ τὸν ἐνὶ ζῳοῖς βεβοαμένον ἱεροφάνταν
κρύπτει ἀμετρήτῳ σάματι θαπτόμενον.
ἔστι Σακέρδωτος τόσον ἡρίον, ἔστι Σεουήρας
μνᾶμα τόδ' ὃ γείτων οὐρανός, οὐκ αἶδας.

οὐράνιον τὸ μνᾶμα καὶ ἃ χρυσήλατος ἀκτὶς
ἀνδρός, ἴσον βιότῳ καὶ τάφον εὐραμένου,
ἄστροις γειτονέοντα: φέρει δ' ὅσον οὔτινα τύμβος
ἀνέρα,, τὸν τελετᾶς οὐρανίδος ζάκορον,
τὸν πάτρην ἐριποῦσαν ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὑψώσαντα,
τὸν φρενὸς ἢ γλώσσας ἄκρα λαχόντα γέρα:
ὃ περὶ δηρίσαντο καὶ ἃ νέκυν ἐν πυρὶ θεῖσα
Ἀτθίς, χά κόλποις ὁστέα δεξαμένα.

τοῦτο Σακέρδωτος μεγάλου μέγα σῆμα τέτυκται
παμφαές, Ἀσκανίης ἄστρον ἐπιχθόνιον,
ἀκτίνων ἀντωπὸν ὃ δ' ἥσυχος ἔνδοθι δαίμων
κεῖται, ὃ καὶ πάτρη δεξιτερὴν τανύσας
κεκλιμένη, καὶ στέμμα περὶ κροτάφοισιν ἀνάψας
ἱερὸν ἐκ πατρὸς παιδὶ νεαζόμενον
ὃν πάτρη μὲν ἔδεκτο φίλον νέκυν, ἥγνισε δ' Ἀτθίς
πυρκαϊῇ, σέβεται δ' Ἑλλὰς ἅπασα πόλις.

ἃ πάτρα Νίκαια, πατήρ δέ μοι ὀργιοφάντας
οὐρανοῦ, αὐτάρ ἐγὼ κλαρονόμος τελετᾶς:
οὔτος ὃ καὶ σεισθεῖσαν ἐμὴν πόλιν ἐξ αἶδαο
ρύσάμενος δώροις Αὐσονίοιο Διός:
θνήσκω δ' Ἀσκανίας μὲν ἀπόπροθεν, ἡδ' ἐπὶ γαίᾳς

Ἀτθίδος ἀρχεγόνου πυρκαϊᾶς ἐπέβαν.
μνᾶμα δέ μοι περίσαμον ὁμώνυμος εὔρατο πάππῳ
παῖς ἐμός· ἅ δ' ἄρετὰ λεύσσει ἐς ἀμφοτέρους.

εἷς γάμος ἀμφοτέρων, ξυνὸς βίος, οὐδὲ θανόντων
μνήμονες ἀλλήλων ἔσχον ἀποικεσίην·
καὶ ζῆ' αἱ μὲν τελεταί τε καὶ ἄρρενος ἔργα, Σακέρδως,
κηρύξει βίοτον πάντας ἐς ἡελίους·
αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ Σεουήραν ἀνὴρ, τέκος, ἥθεα, κάλλος,
τῆς πρὶν Πηνελόπης θήσει ἀοιδότῃην.

4. — Sepulchral Inscription at Nicaea, near the Lake, on the Obelisk
Vaunt, Nicaea, the tomb that mounts to the sky,
the pyramid that is nigh to the sun, which contains
buried in the vast monument the hierophant cele-
brated among the living. Of Sacerdos is this great
sepulchre ; Severa's is this monument whose neigh-
bour is not Hell, but Heaven.

5. — On the Same
Celestial is this monument, with its point of
beaten gold, of a man who has been given a tomb
equal to his life, approaching the stars ; and the
tomb holds a man, like to none other, the ministrant
of the heavenly rites, him who upraised from the
ground his city in ruins, whose were the highest
gifts of intellect and speech, him for whom there
was strife between Attica, that laid his corpse on
the pyre, and his country that received his bones
in her bosom.

6. — On the Same
It was built for the great Sacerdos, this great and
all-resplendent tomb, the terrestrial star of Lake
Ascania, flashing back the rays of the sun, and within
it lies in peace the spirit, who both stretched out his
right hand to his fallen country and bound about his
brows the holy crown that, received from the father,
bloomed again for the son ; him whose dear corpse
his country received, whom Attica purified by fire,
and whom every city of Greece venerates.

7. — On the Same

My country was Nicaea, my father the hierophant
of heaven, and I the inheritor of the holy rite. I
am he who also saved from hell, by the generosity of
Roman Zeus, my country cast down by earthquake.
I died far away from Ascania, and in the Attic land,
the mother of my race, I mounted on the pyre. My
son, who bears his grandsire's name, designed this
magnificent monument for me, and virtue looks on
both.

8. — On the Same

One wedlock was theirs, a common life ; nor in
death, ever mindful of each other, were they di-
vorced. Thee, Sacerdos, thy holy rites and thy manly
works shall proclaim all the days of man's life, but
I, Severa, shall grow more renowned than Penelope
of old through my husband, my son, my virtue, and
my beauty.

The Greek Anthology, Vol.5, XV, 09/05/04-08 (transl. Paton 1916).

2.3 The Sacerdos obelisk as a monument (as deduced from the inscription)

It was an ‘immeasurably’ (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159) high pyramid, vast, approaching the stars. It had a point of beaten gold, flashing back the rays of the sun (a golden pyramidion). Its height is described as sky-high, “nigh to the sun”. The tomb chamber, intended for man and wife, is built in, ‘embraced’ by the pyramid. We speak quite probably of a hypogaeum, partly or entirely subterranean, as it is described as located in the tomb’s womb or bosom; the daimon² lies ‘within’ the monument. Merkelbach (2001:159) must have interpreted the inscriptions as pointing to a subterranean chamber, since he states that Sacerdos’ remains were buried under the pyramid.

2.4 The Philiskos obelisk as a monument

In Nikaia, in the Roman province of Pontus and Bithynia, The Philiskos obelisk tomb was built in the first part of the 2nd century AD. From the dating of the trial against Soranus; a friend of Philiskos’ father Asklepiodotos, it is possible to calculate a date of Philiskos’ death to around

² Daimon is translated by Paton into ‘spirit’. For more on the entity ‘daimon’, see ch. 4.3.1

120 AD (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:110). This date is of course approximate, but a date belonging to the beginning of the 2nd century is confirmed (*IK* 9 Nr.85).

The Philiskos obelisk is still standing, marked as a heritage site. It is enclosed in what looks like a modern *temenos* constructed in the middle of a vast orchard. The landscape is flat and fertile and in antiquity the road to Nikomedeia passed the tomb (Schneider 1943:7). It is situated approximately 5 km north-west of the modern town of Iznik, which corresponds roughly to the ancient town.

The monument can be divided into two parts (fig.27): a quadrangular sockle base and socle in blackish marble, which carries a triangular obelisk base and the obelisk in white marble. The sockle base, as it stands today, is made up of 2 steps, respectively measuring 4,20 m and 3,62 m in length and 0,53 m and 0,45 m in height. The sockle base is topped by a lionfoot bench 2,94 m long and 0,44 m high. The sockle itself is 2,70 m high. It is at the widest at the sockle foundation and at the upper part with *akrotiri*, where it measures approximately 2,30 m. The middle part of the sockle is 2,03 m wide and consists of four lined blocks. The sockle is crowned with *akrotiri* with a wavy palmette motif (fig.26). The obelisk base is Attic (Schneider 1943:7) with an upper (quite eroded) and lower torus, separated by a scotia. The obelisk itself consists of five blocks in the form of steep, truncated, triangular pyramids. The upper measurements are only estimated.

The façade is on the southwestern face of the monument, where an inscription is to be found on the lowest block of the obelisk. It reads: «C. Cassius Philiskos, son of C. Cassius Asklepiodotos, having lived 83 years» (*IK* 9.85) (fig.29). Squared recesses are cut into the top surface of the sockle (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:110; Schneider 1943:7, 9), and corresponding holes are found, mainly on the façade of the sockle and on the eastern and frontal face of the second triangular block from the bottom (fig.30). These were holes for metal clamps, meant to fasten bronze figures (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:110; Schneider 1943:7) or other ornaments (Schneider 1943:7). On inspection the sockle is entirely closed by the four marble blocks and there is no sign of an entrance for a funerary chamber. This may be built in and hidden like in for example the altar tomb of Naevoleia Tyche at Pompeii (Hesberg 1992:176-177). In such case, the chamber would be partly built into the sockle base, with its roof no higher than the level of the outside bench. The rest of the chamber would be subterranean. Alternatively the entire chamber would be a hypogeum.

Southeast of the tomb there is a stone ‘marker’ formed like a knob. It measures 0,30 m in height. It is surrounded by a circular groove in the ground with a diameter of approximately

3,0 m (fig.24). If connected with the tomb, it could perhaps be the mark of the entrance to a subterranean chamber.

2.5 Summary of the tombs as monuments

2.5.1 The Solitary obelisk

The solitary tomb has been termed an obelisk, presumably because of its originally high, slender appearance, but it is in fact a three-sided pyramid, or maybe better an allungated/stretched tetrahedron. It may also be described as a three-sided pillar. Overall the design strongly recalls geometric forms associated with pyramids and obelisks.

The architecture of the tomb is massive in its expression, and delicate details like pictorial or figural reliefs lack. The profile of the façade is finely cut, but the material of large stoneslabs, nevertheless gives a coarse impression. It is possible to assume that the south-western façade which gives on the valley, and the impression of the tomb from a distance, have been the tomb owner's main concerns. The façade would be important, since eventual death cult probably would be conducted in the area in front of the entrance. To judge from the overall shape and the epigraphic evidence from the possibly analogous Sacerdos-monument in Nikaia, it is reasonable to hypothesize that the monument was crowned with a pointed top stone, maybe gilded like the above-mentioned example (*Anth. Pal.* XV₄).

2.5.2 The Sacerdos obelisk

Since the Sacerdos pyramid is called an obelisk from Byzantine times onwards, it seems legitimate to exclude a pyramid of the Egyptian prototype. Whether the pyramid is three-sided or not, there is no mention of. What we know for certain, is that it is remarkably high in stature. So, if it is a tall, slender, *square* pyramid, it is an obelisk of the Egyptian type, also found in abundance in Rome, and it could have been called an obelisk already then. Both terms were used in antiquity. Since 'pyramid' is the word chosen in the epigram, and not obelisk, it is possible that we speak of a tall tetrahedron, since such a form is a pyramid that looks like an obelisk. It should be noted, though, that also obelisks of Rome were termed pyramids in antiquity. Both a square and a triangular base is thus possible. Without a deeper knowledge of terminological use in 2nd century Roman Asia Minor, the form is impossible to confirm with certainty. The tomb chamber is hypogean. All three obelisks, then, seem to have had hypogean chambers with monumental markers of a public character on top, which makes these tombs both highly private and highly public.

2.5.3 The Philiskos obelisk

Of the three so-called obelisk tombs in Asia Minor, the obelisk of Gaius Cassius Philiskos is the most intact. Dernschwam describes it in 1555 as an obelisk with five inclining stones gradually more pointed towards the top. He notes the perforations (for clamps) above the inscription, and the crosses around the inscription. He concludes that it is a funerary monument («begrebnus») (Dernschwam and Babinger 1986:158). The traveller Pococke calls it an obelisk, but informs that the locals call it Beş taş (five stones). Pococke states that it is of a singular kind, for it is triangular. He also concludes that it should be understood as a sepulchral monument, because of the inscription naming the deceased (Pococke 1743:123) (fig.7). The *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (CIG) of AD 1843 introduces it as an obelisk, but when speaking of the acute part, describes it as a «pyramide triangulari». On the Christian crosses and signs the CIG informs that they are of a later date (Boeckh, et al. 1843:962, nr.3759).

The approximately 3 m tall sockle and 7 m tall obelisk (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:110) looks today as Dernschwam described it in 1555. As with the Solitary obelisk, the upper part is best categorized as a triangular pillar or a triangular allungated pyramid, which means that it is not of a singular kind, as Pococke stated. Bekker-Nielsen describes it as an ‘obelisk-like stone spike’ (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:110), a description which is appropriate. The visual impression is that of a spear, sword or an arrow, pointing straight up into the sky (fig.25, 30), despite the fact that at least one block is missing. Bekker-Nielsen (2008:110) and Schneider (1943:7) both estimate that the total height must have been close to twelve meters. The façade is on the southwestern part of the monument, like with the Solitary obelisk. A hypogean tomb chamber is highly probable.

2.6 The Nikaian tomb owners and their position in society

The following interpretations of the tomb owners’ position in society and of suggested cultic, cosmological and mythological connotations for the tombs, will serve for the later comparison and evaluation of common symbolism and cultic significance.

2.6.1 The Sacerdos obelisk

First and foremost Sacerdos was ‘given a tomb equal to his life’ (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:09/05/05). This means that Sacerdos has the same qualities as the tomb; he is magnificent, radiant, brilliant, immeasurably great and “shining like a terrestrial star”. Sacerdos was a renowned priest who revealed sacred objects, a hierophant of heaven (09/05/04,07). He bound the holy crown about his brows, a priestly sign inherited from his

father, a crown blooming again for him, the son. He is further described as ‘a ministrant of the heavenly rites’, probably a further description of the religious priesthood of Hierophant. The specific cult Sacerdos served in, is not mentioned, but his role as an important religious ruler, is repetitively stressed. The lack of a reference to the cult, fits the pattern of secrecy of mystery cult.

“No tomb holds a greater man” (09/05/05). We are to understand that Sacerdos is a supreme example of the perfect citizen, a great benefactor. The inscription speaks of how Sacerdos contributed to the rebuilding of Nikaia after the earthquake (Merkelbach 1987:33; Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159) which is documented to have found place in AD 121 (Ambraseys 2009:125-126). “Him, who upraised from the ground his hometown in ruins”, “Him, who stretched out his right hand to his fallen country” and finally when he speaks of himself: “I am he who saved from Hades, by the generosity of the Roman Zeus, my country cast down by earthquake” (09/05/05-07).³

Other qualities of Sacerdos are the highest gifts of intellect and speech (09/05/05). This implies an active role in society; the role of a statesman. These qualities may have lead the town to choose him as an ambassador, when directing the plea for imperial benefaction after the earthquake. Sacerdos successful embassy contributed greatly to the hometown’s well-being. The same qualities evidently contributed to him representing Nikaia at emperor Hadrian’s pan-hellenic festival in Athens (*Panhellenia*), where he died (Merkelbach 1987:25, 33; Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159, 09/05/05-07).⁴ Attica laid his corpse on the pyre, and he was purified by fire, he whom every city of Greece venerates. About his own death he says: “I died far away from Ascania (Nikaia), and in the Attic land (...) I mounted on the pyre” (09/05/07). At his death, the inscription reports a strife over the right to honour him through death rites, or maybe actually over the right to bury him (09/05/05). This implies a strong connection to Athens, and may support the view that he had a connection to a cult centered there. Nevertheless, Sacerdos’ burnt bones were returned home to Nikaia.

His relatives were also blessed with good qualities: Sacerdos’ son shares his grandfather’s name, and Virtue looks on both. The inscription (09/05/07) refers this quality as *Arete*, and

³ The author agrees with Merkelbach and Paton that emperor Hadrian is meant here. He was often referred to with the epithet of Zeus (Cook 2010: 280, 986, 1120-21, 1262; Nasrallah: 2010:99).

⁴ Nikaia is not listed as one of the twenty-eight cities of the Panhellenion (Boatwright 2000:147-8). The criteria for admission, nevertheless, were met by Nikaia. Boatwright reports them as being at least 28 cities, and the author suggests that Nikaia is another, based on the epigraphic evidence.

instead of Paton's Virtue, Merkelbach und Stauber translate it as "Tüchtigkeit", aber auch 'Erfolg' (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:162, n 8), that is 'Competence' and 'Success'. Still, quite rightly, *Arete* is linked with virtue (Miller 1991:ix). According to writer and philosopher Maximus of Tyre (*Diss.* 26.9 g), *Arete* is what saves Odysseus through all his hardships.

Even though the inscription quite clearly exaggerates Sacerdos preeminence and makes him into a semi-divine figure, there should be no doubt about his considerable contribution to society. With his extremely generous benefactory deed acted towards the hometown after the earthquake, Sacerdos was certainly a candidate for an intramural funerary monument (Cormack 2004:45-46; Schörner 2007:119-121, 142). His acts and offices in fact resemble Opramos' of Rhodiapolis, whose public career is described as a blue-print for a civic *euergetes* of the 2nd century AD (Cormack 2004:46). Merkelbach (1987:33) states that the city had the tomb erected in Sacerdos' memory. Sacerdos himself (09/05/07) declares that his son designed it, and a joint project may of course be the case. Whether he was benefitted with the honour of an intramural burial, or a burial close to the city gates, is not ascertained, but the inscription's opening lines (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:09/05/04): "Vaunt, Nicaea, the tomb that mounts to the sky..." indicates a communal 'ownership'. Further indications of an intramural placing, is the denomination of the tomb as the terrestrial star of lake Ascania. Lake Ascania is today Lake Iznik, and The Roman walls stretch partly along the lake. Citizens who got intramural funerals, in many cases had become part of the civic identity of the city itself (Cormack 2004:45), and the obelisk is described as the terrestrial star of the city (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:09/05/06), not only of Sacerdos and Severa. Still, Severa describes it as a different living space, their new home. This statement implies a contemporaneous private sphere, contrasting the public monumentality.

If Sacerdos' son, his wife Severa, or both, are authors of the inscriptions, their future ambitions for the son may shine through. In fact the three generations are presented as some kind of 'holy triad', and by underlining the hereditary link between grandfather, father and son, the chances for the office as hierophant, may be enhanced/increased. The lofty praise of Sacerdos would then in reality be, at least partly, an investment in the son's future career. Sacerdos may have been more 'modest'/or different in life from how he is portrayed in the inscription. As such, what we get an insight into is more the essence of the ideal citizen than of Sacerdos himself. Where Sacerdos 'himself' speaks (09/05/07) the bond between the three generations is further stressed, and virtue (*Arete*) is represented as a quality hallmark of the family. Oliver (Oliver 1970:43), referring Foucart, concludes that three priesthoods connected to the Eleusinian mysteries were in fact hereditary, and if drawn by lot, only formally so. These

were the priesthoods of *dadouchos* (torchbearer), *ceryces* (heralds/proclaimers) and *hierophant*. It seems then that Sacerdos' son could hope to inherit his father's prestigious office. Only if the son was not of age or otherwise unfit, the office was at risk of being lost to someone else, but even then most often to a member of the same family (Oliver 1970-44). The recommending tone of Sacerdos may as such be caused by the son being quite young at the time of Sacerdos' death. A further, indirect reference to the son's young age, may be Severa's identification with Penelope, whose son Telemachos was young when Odysseus went away on his journey. Still, if it is correct that the son designed his father's tomb like Sacerdos says he did (09/05/07), he could not have been a small child. Whether Sacerdos' son was an adult or not, there seems to be at least some general stress connected with the access to these priesthoods. Merkelbach claims that the grandfather may have given the name Sacerdos to his son in hope for him to get a future priestly office (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159). It may have been with the same outcome in mind that Sacerdos gave his son the name of the boy's grandfather (09/05/07). With all these namely precautions it may seem that the hereditary right when it came to these offices, was not totally indisputable.

Sacerdos was cremated, "purified by fire" (09/05/06). This could imply affinities concerning identity, religion or both.

2.6.2 The Philiskos obelisk

The Cassius family is mentioned by two ancient authors. Cassius Dio (Hist. Rom. Vol.VIII, book 62, 26) refers how Cassius Asklepiodotos, Philiskos' father, heroically risked his life standing up for a nobleman falsely accused of practicing magic. Tacitus speaks of the same episode and accordingly praises the virtuous manner in which C. Asklepiodotos loyally supported his friend without concern for his own welfare. Tacitus (*Ann.* 16.33) additionally informs of the wealth which made Cassius a prominent man in Bithynia. C. Asklepiodotos is not the only outstanding member of the Cassius family. C. Cassius Chrestos, either Philiskos' brother or uncle (Sahin 1978:17) or other relative (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:114), had a humble sarcophagus, but an elitist life at the 'imperial' level, figuring on the city wall as agent of inscriptions dedicated to the emperor and to «the proconsul...(from) his friend C. Cassius Chrestos» (Sahin 1978:15). His terse tomb inscription informs that he was *presbys*, *archiereus* and *sebastophant* (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:112; Sahin 1978:16). At the Demostheneia at Oinoanda, during Hadrian's reign, sebastophants carried images of the emperor and Apollo (Clauss 1999:340; Nijf 2001:318; Wörrle 1988:9-11, 216-219). The combination of the offices as *archiereus*, *agonothete* and *sebastophant* was a usual constellation at the provincial level in

Asia with examples from Smyrna, Ephesos and Aphrodisias (Friesen 2001:114). In the case of Cassius Chrestos, the office of *agonothete* is replaced with the office of *presbys*. Further there is a Cassius Lyaius, mentioned in a dedicatory inscription (Sahin 1981:II,1 I. nr.701-703). He is connected to the Zeus Bronton cult and had the title of *defensor civitatis*. He was an urban administrator, a permanent mediator between the city and the central administration. Of the same family and still of the 2nd century is Cassius Apronianus and his son, the historian Cassius Dio. They were both senators (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:114). Along with these, Sahin (1987:88) lists Philiskos father, Asklepiodotos, as a senator. This may be meant as him being of senatorial family, or that he as well, in fact was a senator.

The inscription of Cassius Philiskos does not give much information, except for his age at death and his father's name. Considering that he was the only relative to be mentioned, Philiskos must have wanted to be associated with his father's name and memory. The *cursus honorum* lacks in the inscription of Cassius Philiskos, but there is little doubt that he held important offices, since the Cassii were of the richest and most influential of Nikaia, and since the other family members were occupying important imperial and religious offices throughout the 2nd century. Philiskos' old age and the monumentality of the tomb, further indicates a considerable career in politics.

Varhelyi (2010:175) claims that in senatorial funerary inscriptions, only the father's name would be included and that such a short genealogy was a characteristic of a senatorial rank of the deceased. Some further, regular funerary choices can be distinguished for senators, such as the decorated ash-urn or the funerary altar (Várhelyi 2010:175). The lower part (sockle base and sockle) of Philiskos' tomb may in its own respect be an altar, and when considering Cassius Apronianus', Cassius Dion's and possibly Cassius Asklepiodotos' senatorial posts, such a political career for Cassius Philiskos as well, would not be improbable.

Additionally, belonging to the landowning elite (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:109, 114), Philiskos would not only be involved in city life on an imperial level, but also in rural production. Placed quite isolated (Berns 2003:159, n.277) on a flat, fertile plain, his impressive tomb may have represented his identity both as a prominent Roman citizen of Nikaia and as a wealthy landowner.

2.7 Cult, cosmology and mythology as indicated by the Nikaian tombs

2.7.1 The Sacerdos obelisk

The whole inscription is saturated with cosmological references to the sky, the heavens, the sun and the stars. The celestial tomb points into heaven and is close to the sun. It is shining throughout, it is the earthly star of Askania (Nikaia), flashing back the rays of the sun. The couple are neighbours of heaven, not of Hades. The cult is referred to as having heavenly rites, father and son being hierophants of heaven.

Nikaia prided herself in a foundation by Theseus, the mythic founder of Athens. In the Sacerdos-inscription, Attica is referred to as the mother of their (the Nikaiaans'/Bithynians') race (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:09/05/07, n.6). Other foundation myths involved Dionysos and Herakles (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:22; Farnell 2010:134, 259; Merkelbach 1987:25).

Homeric references were typical of the philosophical and elitist discourse, particularly of the 2nd century AD, and we see them also in the Sacerdos inscription. Like Odysseus was able to return from Hades, Sacerdos brought back his country (Nikaia) from Hades. He is capable of godly, or at least semi-godly action. This act makes him grand on two levels: on the human level he is a benefactor, but added to this he can use his semi-divine capacities as a daimon, to enhance this contribution to society. Like priests of imperial Athens (Horster 2011:202), he may have been even more honoured as a benefactor than as a priest.

Severa claims that she will “grow more renowned than Penelope of old through my husband, my son, my virtue, and my beauty” (09/05/08). This is a very clear Homeric reference, where Severa presents herself as the new Penelope. Severa's identification with Odysseus' wife, describes her identity-wise, linking also her to an upper-class trend of the *Second Sophistic* where the elite made implicit reference to Homer to strengthen their connection to a glorious past and to demonstrate their cultural capacity (Boatwright 2000:141; Zeitlin 2006:196, 205, 241-245).

Odysseus philosophical popularity shows in comments by the stoic philosopher Dio Chrysostom and the Platonizing moralists Plutarch and Maximus of Tyre, celebrating his higher wisdom and virtue (Montiglio 2011:15, 78-81). Penelope's fame reached the sky (Montiglio 2011:100), and she, as her husband, was identified with philosophy and wisdom. Platonic thought (Montiglio 2011:34-36) suggested that Odysseus and his travel home represented the soul striving to reach its celestial home, where Penelope was an allegory for 'wisdom' (Montiglio 2011:89, 152).

Sacerdos was a hierophant of Heaven. Of cults with hierophants, the Eleusinian, Eleusinian-like mysteries and Dionysos cult are the best known. Still, other mystery cults also had hierophants, and there were e.g. Orphic hierophants (Kutash 2010:3). The most famous reference to a hierophant of heaven, is maybe the commentator Heraclitus' reference (1st – 2nd century AD) to Homer as “the great hierophant of heaven and the gods” (*qu. Hom.* 76.1). Various schools of thought, uncovered in Homer marvelous disclosures about the secrets of the mystical realms above, he was “a source from which knowledge on all matters could in principle be culled” (Bockmuehl 1990:80-81; Heraclitus *qu. Hom.* 18.1; Sandnes 2011:119-120).

Sacerdos and Severa were most probably Roman citizens (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159). Still, their heritage was Greek, and the 2nd century trends of the Second Sophistic and Hadrian's Pan-hellenic programme further encouraged them to make such references. Sacerdos is referred to as a Daimon by Merkelbach und Stauber (09/05/06), Paton translates this into ‘spirit’. The Greek Daimon is a complicated entity, but a Platonic understanding of it (Plato *Symp.* 201d-204c), refers: «all daimons are an intermediate between the divine and the mortal». According to Maximus of Tyre, Plato's conception of divinity included an innumerable multitude of divine entities, partly consisting of the natures of the stars in the heavens, and partly of dæmoniacal essences in æther (Maximus *Diss.I.* What God is according to Plato).

2.7.2 The Philiskos obelisk

It is the author's impression that the tomb of Philiskos has a twofold composition (fig.23, 30). The lower part (sockle base and sockle) may in its own respect be an altar tomb. The form is similar to for example the tomb of Naevoleia Tyche in Pompeii and the altar tomb of Q. Etuvius Capreolus in Aquileia. Hesberg says that there is no evidence for altars as basements for «aediculen, flachen tumuli oder pyramiden» (Hesberg 1992:175). He continues by saying that altar tombs are virtually unknown in the eastern Mediterranean, but that in 2nd - 3rd century Bithynia a peculiar combination of the altar as a substructure for sarcophagi is found (Graef 1892:80-86, tafel V; Hesberg 1992:179-181, abb.114). On the example depicted by Graef (fig.28), there are *akrotiri* with a wavy palmette motif, both incized on top of the altar base and cut on the sarcophagus lid. The motif is very similar to that of the sockle of the Philiskos tomb (fig.26, 27).

Even though Hesberg claims that altar tombs are unknown in the eastern mediterranean, there is evidence to the opposite. Berns argues that some cubic structures in Ephesos, with and

without chambers, clad with marble panels, were designed in accordance with, and modelled on altar tombs (Berns 2003:75-76). He also documents other examples in Asia minor (Berns 2003:143, 151). In his article “Pedestals as ‘altars’ in Roman Asia Minor”, Coulton thoroughly documents the use of the altar as pedestals in Roman Asia Minor. Epigraphic and archaeological material combined, confirm that the word *bomos* was used for such pedestals and bases for centuries (Coulton 2005:145). Particularly in the Bithynian area around Nikaia and Nikomedeia these *bomoi* were carrying either statues, *ostothekai*, sarcophagi or columns. Coulton considers the presence of *akrotiri* as the characteristic of an altar (Coulton 2005:130, 133-137, 139-140, 142-144, 146): «It was marked as an altar by *akroteria*» (Coulton 2005:130). The altarshaped base of the Philiskos obelisk has such *akrotiri* (fig.26). The probability of this base having been meant as an altar must thus be considered high.

The evidence from Hierapolis (Phrygia) also includes the altar in the funerary material. During the 1st and the 2nd centuries AD the use of the elevated sarcophagus develops. Big, horizontally roofed, cubic structures were in their own right tombs with funerary beds, but they contemporaneously functioned as support for one or more sarcophagi. Inscriptions name them *bomoi* with a clear symbolical significance (Ronchetta 1999:133). The altar was one of the important expressions of self-portrayal: these giant tombs were a reminder of the cultic aspect and the sacred ‘aura’ of death cult, an elevated form of commemoration on an abstract level (Coulton 2005:139-140; Hesberg 1992:170, 171, 180-181; Ritti 1985:87-88). Altars indicate an offer, but altar tombs are first and foremost tombs, and thus a place for death cult more than for offering (Hesberg 1992:170). They were magnified versions of altars, thereby assuming a shape which relieved them of their original function as sacrificial tables. The monument, with its overdimensioned functionlessness, symbolically indicated the worship of a heroized fellow citizen (Hesberg 1992:173-174).

Acknowledging the evidence of the use of altars in an Asia Minor tomb context, the possibility of a lower part of the Philiskos tomb in the form of an altar, should be considered. The similarity to the altar described and depicted by Graef, and the altars of Zeus Litaïos on Nikaian bronzes, further strengthens the possibility of the sockle being an altar, carrying in its own right a sacral significance (Coulton 2005:33, 127-129, 136, 140, 144-146; Hesberg 1992:170-171). The cubic altar and the triangular obelisk put together, may have had a specific cultic significance to the tomb owner, and to those who shared his religious convictions.

3 COMPARATIVE MATERIAL

This chapter presents the Mediterranean tombs with pyramids and obelisks as markers. A common symbology is suggested by Hermann and Triebel for all such tombs. Along with the physical descriptions I search to expose the symbolical and societal connotations of the tombs and their owners. This allows for an as reliable examination of the proposed common characteristics as possible.

3.1 Monumental pyramid and obelisks as tombs

It makes little sense to mention all monumental tombs of the Hellenistic and Roman era. Fedak (1990:19) underlines that an organization (thousands of largescale burials) of these tombs, is an enormous task which involves years of field and library research. I will not embark on this task, but rather mention them to give an idea of the total material group. Of a slender, tall type (the height of these monuments vary) are the Mesopotamian stelai, the Assyrian ‘obelisks’, the Persian and Assyrian towers (pyramidal and not) (Ball 2001:364; De Trafford 2007:142-145; Fedak 1990:34), Phoenician conical or multi storey monuments (Bard 2008:50,118; De Trafford 2007:69-70, 110-113, tafel IV, V), the Lykian pillar tombs of Asia Minor (De Trafford 2007:143-145, tafel XLIII, 110-112, tafel XXIX; Fedak 1990:17, 42, 66), Semitic pyramidal tombs (Bard 2008:119-120; De Trafford 2007; Triebel 2004:63-107), the Nabatean pyramidal ‘obelisks’ (De Trafford 2007:121-132, 261-262, tafel XXXII-XXXVIII; Toynbee 1971:192, pl.71; Triebel 2004:117-133), North-African/punic ‘needles’ (multi-storeyed obelisks) (Bard 2008:118, 147-150; Fedak 1990:133-139, fig.186-191; Mattingly 2011:247-249; Toynbee 1971:178, pl.64, 65) and many spread, both Hellenistic and Roman examples of tombs with pyramidal parts, such as, most often, the roof, or the point (Bard 2008, 119-120, 144-145, 162; De Trafford 2007:109-110; Fedak 1990:29, 32-37). I am sure more forms could be mentioned, but the abovementioned forms are found in considerable numbers (fig.31), even though many have perished and are recorded only through secondary sources.

Some forms are more uniform than others and this project will view these in light of Hermann and Triebel’s postulation of a common symbology. Their description forms the foundation for a comparison with the primary material in the analysis.

3.1.1 Semitic tombs (mostly Hellenistic)

512 funerary reliefs of pyramid- or obelisk-like pillars are documented around Petra (Fedak 1990: 151). As made clear by the theory of a common symbology for Mediterranean pyramids suggested by Triebel, semitic pyramids, or ‘nefesh’, could express a hope for soul ascent. Still,

the soul could settle, it seems, permanently or partly in the stone (Triebel 2004:252-3, 256-258). Deep cut rock tombs, like the Khaznet Fir'aun (the Treasury of the Pharaoh) and the so-called Obelisk tomb, are well known examples of Nabatean 'obelisks' of pyramidal form (De Trafford 2007:119-125, 129; Fedak 1990:153, 156-157; Toynbee 1971:193; Triebel 2004:129; Wright 1997:115). The monumentality and the grandeur of these tombs indicate royal burials (Fedak 1990:150, 153; Wright 1997:115). It is probable that economy in for example Petra at some point ended up under royal administration and that these kings were in control of Nabatean trade (Diodorus *Bibl. Hist.* XIX 98-100; Rostovtzeff, et al. 1971:27). The sacrality of the tombs, e.g. the temple facades of the royal tombs indicate sacral rule in addition to economical and political rule. Further, the pyramidal form is spread throughout the whole Semitic area, exemplified with tombs like the Amrith tomb (Syria), the Hermel tomb (Lebanon) and the tomb of Zechariah (Jerusalem) (Hesberg 1992:119; Toynbee 1971:172). Triebel (2004:277) sees at least the Hermel tomb as the tomb of a High Priest connected to sun cult.

3.1.2 North-African obelisk tombs and mausolea (Hellenistic and Roman)

The North African pyramidal mausolea of the Punic-Numidian regions (Libya, Algeria and Tunisia) appear both in the Hellenistic and the Roman epoch (Bard 2008:119; Fedak 1990:133). The *Hellenistic* kind is high, of 2-3 storeys, gradually diminishing in size upwards.

Of these, Sabratha (Tripolitania), called the Mausoleum of Bes, has the richest decoration. It is triangular in section, ca 23 m high, of the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC (MacKendrick 1980:165; Winter 2006:93) and of a monumental tripod-like design. The tomb of a Massylian king in Siga, presumably Vermina, is also triangular (Fedak 1990:134, 399). The owners of the North African Hellenistic tombs represented the punic elite. Two of the tombs presumably belonged to the strongly Hellenized Massylian kings (Fedak 1990:134-137). They were also loyal to the Roman republic (Cicero *Somn.* 1.1-1.2). As a matter of fact a victorious Roman outcome of the second Punic war, depended on king Masinissa, who between 200-170 BC supplied vast amounts of grain to the Roman army (MacKendrick 1980:23, 189). These elitist tomb owners contributed to stability and order through sacral rule and benefactory deeds.

The most uniform *Roman* group of pyramidal mausolea, are to be found in the Ghirza cemetery of Tripolitania, in a border area between the Roman settlements and the desert (Barker, et al. 1996:146; Hesberg 1992:149; Mattingly 2011:247-249; Toynbee 1971:178). The owners of the North African Roman mausolea and obelisks represented the pre-desert elite of Punicized Romano-Libyan aristocrats. They were settled and had fortified farms (Mattingly

2011:253), and they were presumably involved in regional politics (Barker, et al. 1996:104, 341)

The tombs of the southern part of the cemetery, were between 13-18 m tall with subterranean chambers (Barker, et al. 1996:146). Their slenderness makes them more obelisk-like than tower-like. The friezes show, among other, symbols of fertility (phallic carvings and pinecones) (Mattingly 2011:254-257). The temple mausolea of the northern part of the cemetery show scenes of daily farming life, the obelisks do not, and it is possible that the mausolea belonged to the landholders and the obelisks to the priests, indicating sacral rule, maybe connected to fertility cult, controlling agricultural produce, and to the sun cult of Gurzil (Barker, et al. 1996:102, 142, 341; EAA 2003:88). Tomb Gh. 128 has an unidentified flying figure depicted on its frieze, next to what seems to be a family of parents and a child. The figure carries a torch and a wreath (Toynbee 1971:178), and the figure may indicate a belief in soul ascent.

3.1.3 Rome – Out of Africa

IMP. CAESAR. DIVI. FIL. AVGVSTVS. PONTIFEX. MAXIMUS. IMP. XII. COS. XI. TRIB. POP. XIV. AEGVPTO. IN. POTESTATEM. POPVLI. ROMANI. REDACTA. SOLI. DONUM. DEDIT (on the obelisks imported by Augustus in 10 BC) (Curran 2009: 37).

It's a long step from the Golden Age of the Old Kingdom of Egypt to the Ptolemaic reign which the Roman conquerors encountered upon their establishing of the Roman province of Egypt in the early imperial era. But because of the remarkable continuity in Egyptian cultic and architectural form and content (Assmann 2003: 20, 423; Schweizer 2010: 111, 178) it is a step which is possible to take. In 30 BC Egypt is annexed by Rome, during the reign of the first Roman emperor, Augustus. In his time, the pyramidal form was introduced in Rome, and a monument of this shape is built as a tomb to the magistrate Gaius Cestius (Bard 2008:116-117; De Trafford 2007:276). It is a 36,4 metres tall square-based pyramid in opus caementicum, sheathed in marble blocks (Bard 2008:5,116; Toynbee 1971:127-128). Inscriptions on two sides of the pyramid give Cestius' names and titles and the circumstances of the tomb's erection (Toynbee 1971:127-128, pl.33). The main text reads: Gaius Cestius Epulo, son of Lucius, of the Poblilian voting tribe, *praetor*, *tribune of the People*, member of *the Board of Seven* of the public feasts (Hope 2007:65; Keppie 2001:104).

The annexation of Egypt to the Empire and the consequent fashion for things Egyptian, probably explain this monument's Egyptian shape, also because this reduced version of the

pyramidal form is not seen in the Mediterranean area otherwise (Bard 2008:116; Toynbee 1971:128). Still, Cestius' choice of tomb-design (Reid 2002:24), is reminiscent of the Nubian pyramidal form of Meroe, where Cestius might have served in the Augustean campaigns (Curl 2013:39-40; Kirwan 1957; Török 2009:427-442). Regardless of Cestius' specific inspiration, the pyramid was an already honoured gravetype 'par excellence', and as a sacred motive (Bard 2008:117; De Trafford 2007:276) it may have fit Cestius' wishes for a suitable priestly burial as a sacral ruler. Cestius being of the Poblilian tribe, a rural tribe, indicates that he belonged to the landowning aristocracy (Crawford 2002:1125-1135). The monument, along with three other pyramidal tombs mentioned by Hesberg (2008:116) demonstrate the Roman triumph in Africa.

In 10 BC Augustus got the two first obelisks transported down the Nile and across the Mediterranean. They originally stood in Heliopolis and were re-erected in Rome, one in Circus Maximus and the other in Campus Martius as the pointer in a monumental sun-dial. By the middle of the 4th century AD, according to the *Codice topografico della città di Roma* (Curran 2009:37, 42, 44), nearly fifty obelisks of varying size graced Rome. At least six were installed in Isis' sanctuary in the Campus Martius. In addition to the imported stones, both Domitian and Hadrian had new obelisks built (Curran 2009:46-49). Hadrian's obelisk was in honour of his Bithynian lover Antinous who drowned in the Nile in AD 130.

It is in the Roman world that we see monumental obelisks in a grave context (Hesberg 1992:118; Triebel 2004:109). It is also suggested that the afore-mentioned Antinous-obelisk was used as his tomb marker after the obelisk was transported to Rome (Curran 2009:49). These suggestions are based on findings in the Antinoeion of Hadrian's Villa (Mari and Sgalambro 2007:83, 87, 96-98) that may implicate that the tomb marker stood in the Iseum/Sarapeum in the Canopus garden (Mari and Sgalambro 2007:99, 101-102).

Antinous was identified with Osiris in Egypt and with Dionysus in the Graeco-Roman world (Curran 2009:49). His death is generally suspected of having been engineered for sacrificial purposes, since it coincided with both the festival of the Nile and the feast of Osiris (Cass. Dio *Hist. Rom.* Vol.VIII, book 69.11). Osiris, like Dionysus, was believed ritually to die and rise again, and to heal from death. On the obelisk-tomb of Antinous, Hadrian's lover, Antinous' eternal existence and/or his immortality is directly or indirectly referred to twenty-three times. The inscription invokes his soul's eternal youth "at every moment of every night, and every day, for all Eternity!" Antinous the God, being among the shining ones of heaven is referred twice, implying his soul's ascent (Andrews 2000:146; Schweizer 2010:69; Waters 1995:197; Wild 1981:99; Wypustek 2012:160). Plutarch refers the rite of Osiris' rebirth in *De*

Iside and Osiride (sect. 18, 19, 35, 36, 39) and drowning in the Nile was believed to bring immortality (Wild 1981:99; Wypustek 2012:160). The Nile was of course the life-bringing source of a fertile agriculture and continuous prosperity, first for Egypt herself, later for Rome, as Egypt got to be the empire's granary.

3.2 Triangular tombs

3.2.1 Sabratha (North Africa)

The presentation of the tombs of the comparative material which are triangular, starts with the afore-mentioned Mausoleum of Bes. Heracles fighting the Nemean lion and the god Bes are central decorative elements on the tomb. Bes was an Egyptian god connected to fertility and protection. He was a protector of birth, rebirth and resurrection and of Re on his journey through the underworld. He was later to be identified with the Sun god (Dasen 2013:61; Meyboom and Versluys 2007:175-176; Teissier 1996:188). By conquering the Nemean lion, a monster offspring of the dragon Typhon and a threat to the civilized world, Heracles restored the hierarchy of the universe and upheld order in the service of the cosmos (Hesiod *Theog.* 313-32; Launderville 2007:161, 370). Again we see that cosmogony in these predominantly agricultural communities was actively created. The thematics, combined with the tomb's impressive form and height, makes it possible to imagine a sacral function similar to the pharaonic, but on a lesser scale, for the tomb owner. Sabratha served as a Phoenician coastal outlet for the products of the African hinterland at least from the 4th century BC (MacKendrick 1980:143). There may additionally be some agonethetic symbolism in the design of the Hellenized tomb, with a reference to hero cult in Athens (Winter 2006:93).

3.2.2 The Tripod tomb at Knidos (Asia Minor)

At Knidos there are two Hellenistic triangular pillars belonging to a funerary complex (3rd century BC) of a person named Antigonos (Berns 2005:32, 35). The complex is called the 'Tripod tomb', because of their similarity to the known agonethetic monuments of Athens (fig.36). The whole precinct should be regarded a gymnasium (Newton and Pullan 1863:473). The pillars were eight to ten meters high (Berns 2005:34-35) with sockets for the reception of the legs of a bronze tripod on top (Newton and Pullan 1863:479, pl.161, fig.3). This may appear to be a tomb symbolising the owner's heroic triumph or agonethetic activity. Like the Athenian prototypes, the pillars do not have an inwards inclination, unlike pyramids or obelisks.

3.2.3 Kerameikos (Athens)

There are several triangular tombs in Athens. They are documented from the Hellenistic period, but they were also frequent in Roman Athens. They are ca. 1-2 m. tall (Conze 1922 Vol.XVII:44, nr.1911; Vol.XVIII:62-63, nr.1979-1984). They are located in Kerameikos, an ancient part of Athens, situated on 'The Sacred Way'. This is the procession road from Athens to Eleusis, on which Plato's Academy also was to be found (Goodman 2006:27). There are more examples of these triangular tombs crowned with poppies (Brückner 1910:48-49, nr. 33, fig.22; Conze 1922 Vol.XVIII:62-63).

Brückner (1910:48-49) suggests that these triangular tombs may be related to 'triangular Artemis symbolism'. This may be the case, but whilst Artemis' emblem is the crescent moon, the poppy capsule is usually attributed to Demeter (Kerényi and Manheim 1991:55; Theocritus *Id.* VII. 45). One of the poppy-crowned tombs, the Sosibios tomb is in the Hekate area of the cemetery. This would further link this symbolism to Demeter, not to Artemis, since Hekate traditionally assisted Demeter in the search for Persephone.)

It seems that both in Hellenistic and Roman Athens these tombs often belonged to those who died young/'unripe' (*ἄωρος*) (Brückner 1910:49, nr.33; Conze 1922 Vol.XVIII: 62-63). The pyramid of Sinope (475-450 BC), a triangular grave pyramid of the daughter of the Carian, Nadys, with a relief of mother and the deceased daughter, shows that this tradition was not restricted to Athens (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:10/06/01). It is possible that these tombs belong to children of persons connected with cults with a soteriological doctrine of soul ascent, maybe connected with the nearby Eleusinian cult. The triangular form may convey a religio-philosophical belief tied to a universal world view.

3.3 Monumental pyramid and obelisks as tombs in Asia Minor

There are five, possibly six, Roman, pyramidal tombs of a high stature in Asia Minor. Apart from the two Nikaian and the Hierapolitan obelisk, a third Nikaian tomb may bear resemblance to the Philiskos- and the Sacerdos-obelisk (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:164, 09/05/09 note 4; Paton 1916 *Anth. Pal.* VII, 701). The Papanisi (Baba-adassi) tomb and the Silandos tomb further have tall, pyramidal markers.

All these monumental tombs have some common traits, like most evidently their height. This, combined with their distinct, exotic originality, certainly made them all stand out as prominent markers in their environment. Furthermore, four out of five seem to have been placed relatively isolated in the terrain, although still highly visible. The Sacerdos obelisk was possibly placed within the city or close to the city walls, but like the four others, it was meant

for an audience (Hesberg 1992:50). Although resembling in stature, these tombs have obvious differences: The Baba-Adassi pyramid has never been called an obelisk, and as a matter of fact it is far from slender enough to get that designation (Berns 2003:159; Hesberg 1992:120; Maiuri 1924:419-421). Likewise, the example in Silandos has never been termed an obelisk. Thus there is nothing to certify that it is slender in form, or for that matter, triangular (Ahrens 2011:105; Merkelbach and Stauber 1998:04/14/01).

The term obelisk indicates a slender stature for the two Nikaian and the one Hierapolitan tomb. Two of them are triangular, and this may well be the case of the third example, as well. The particular form combined with a slender appearance, then, seems to be what makes these three tombs stand out from the rest of the material in the Eastern Mediterranean of the Roman era.

4 ANALYSIS

The analysis starts with a preliminary evaluation of Triebel's claim of a common symbology for obelisk- and pyramid-tombs in the Mediterranean area. The evaluation represents a summary of possible symbolical and cultic content for the comparative material, and forms the basis for a further elaboration on the possible symbolical and cultic significance of the obelisks of Asia Minor.

In considering Hermann and Triebel's five postulates for a common symbology for pyramids, obelisks are included, because they bear much of the same symbolic significance as pyramids. On both pyramids and obelisks the pyramidion was often sheathed in bronze, gold or electrum to catch the sun's rays. The idea may have been to literally pierce the sky, connecting the earth to the realm of the sun god (Curran 2009:14). A triangular obelisk is additionally by definition a pyramid, despite the slender appearance of an obelisk. It is thus possible that the obelisks of Nikaia and Hierapolis carried the symbolic significance of both pyramids and obelisks.

4.1 The origin – the Egyptian belief pattern

The geometrical symbolism of the pyramid is ascent to heaven (Assmann 2003:55, 58). It is the monumental hill, which houses the pharaohs' burial chamber. The pyramid is the medium through which the Ba-soul of the pharaoh rises up to the Sun God; a symbol of resurrection. During the night the king recreates cosmogony within the tomb, defeating the snake of chaos, Apopis (Assmann 2003:147, 209; Schweizer 2010:19, 139-141). The Egyptian pyramid then, is a place of continuous creation, fight against chaos, a place of rebirth, a place where life conquers death and order conquers chaos (Schweizer 2010:6-7). The Cheops pyramid is called *akhet* of Khufu in Egyptian. *Akhet* refers to the region of the heavens where the sky nears the earth and the king's soul ascends from the underworld in the morning, leaves the pyramid top at sunrise (Triebel 2004:275) to join his Ka-soul on the journey of the sun, and return when the sun sets (Assmann 2003:58; Schweizer 2010:93-95). The pyramid symbolizes *akhet* in an aniconic way. As the sun god ascends from the underworld to the *akhet* and appears in the sky, so the king interred in the pyramid, ascends to heaven by way of his *akhet*, his threshold of light. The central topic of the pyramid texts, is ascent to heaven and incorporation into the circuit of the sun and to become part of the cosmic order (Assmann 2003:58-59; Taylor 2010:54, 105-107). The sacral ruler, in death, continued to administer the life-giving cycles

necessary for the welfare of society (Assmann 2003:207-212; Schweizer 2010:4-8; Wilson 2013:86-87).

4.2 A summary comment on Triebel's claim to common symbology

There may be a common symbology, similar to that of Egypt, connected to the use of the pyramidal form in the Mediterranean area of Hellenistic and Roman times. It is nevertheless quite demanding, if not impossible, in each case to prove, or disprove, the presence of the five characteristics postulated for these tombs by Triebel. The tombs *may* all represent a belief in soul ascent, and they *may* all have some kind of number magic of philosophical and mathematical nature attached to them. The sun may be a common component, but it is an impression of this work that for some of these tombs the connection seems more cosmic than purely solar. It is additionally here proposed that the *tall* markers in these predominantly agricultural societies may share a characteristic.

The tall obelisk- and pyramidal tombs of the Mediterranean area seem to a large extent to be of sacral rulers connected with economical produce, goods either for trade or agricultural produce for the community's own consume. Like the pharaonic pyramids, their pyramidal tombs may have communicated a guarantee of continued abundance and prosperity for the community. The guarantee would imply that the deceased continued his service of benefaction and/or of life-giving and protecting cultic practice, in death.

As seen by the secondary material, each pyramid- and obelisk tomb of the Mediterranean seem to cover some of Triebel's criteria, but not all contemporaneously (table 1). The tombs of this study are all distant from their alleged origin in Egypt, both in time and place. As such, proof for such common symbology could hardly be expected, but Hermann and Triebel's postulations nevertheless serve well as a theoretical framework for comparison.

4.3 The obelisks of Asia Minor according to Triebel's description

4.3.1 The Sacerdos obelisk

The sun is mentioned twice in the inscription, "nigh to the sun" and "flashing back the rays of the sun". The tomb seems to communicate with the sun, approaching it.

Sacerdos' soul is described as a daimon, lying within the tomb in peace. His soul or spirit (daimon) rests within the tomb, but it does not seem confined to the tomb. The tomb is described as a womb, and this may imply a rebirth of the deceased, and some sort of soul ascent. It seems similar to the Egyptian concept of royal soul ascent described for Pharaoh Khufu

(Cheops), where the king returned to his subterranean grave-chamber each night. The use and interpretation of the word ‘daimon’ is ambiguous and many-faceted, but In Plato’s *Symposium*, the daimonion is the region of the spirits that lies between men and gods, a place for communication. Here the philosopher and priestess Diotima of Mantinea explains the powers and the role of daimones to Socrates:

They are “interpreting and transporting human things to the gods and divine things to men; entreaties and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and requitals from above: being midway between, it makes each to supplement the other, so that the whole is combined in one. Through it are conveyed all divination and priestcraft concerning sacrifice and ritual...” (Plat. *Symp.* 202e).

We know that Sacerdos is a sacral ruler. He is a *Hierophant* of Heaven, celebrated among the living, a ministrant of the heavenly rites. He is probably holding more priestly offices, as we see with other members of the political class of Bithynia (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:105-114). Two other Bithynian careers report a combination of the office of hierophant with other offices (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:105, 108). His office as hierophant may be the most prestigious, since there is such pronounced focus on it in the inscriptions. Still, the fact that he is one that “every city of Greece venerates”, makes it probable that he had an additional and even higher, or more prestigious position in society, for example as *Asiarch* or *Bithyniarch*. His use of imperial money for the rebuilding of Nikaia implies that he was one of the highest embassies of Nikaia, and most probably a ‘friend of the emperor’.

Since we do not know whether the Sacerdos obelisk was square or triangular in form, the mathematical and philosophical implications are hard to evaluate. Still, its description as an ‘immeasurably’ (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159) high pyramid, has a symbolical meaning, since the monument in itself of course was measurable. Either it is unimaginably tall, or the word ‘immeasurable’ indicates other dimensions than physical length/height/form, maybe an ‘overearthly’ dimension, connecting man with cosmos or *aether*. In either case the monument has been very tall and possibly of a form that figuratively implies immeasurable grandeur of some kind.

Again, since we do not know the form of the pyramidal obelisk, the specific cultic affiliation is hard to establish. Still, the cosmological (stellar and heavenly) symbology may indicate an Orphic connection, or that of a similar mystery religion, like e.g. Hermeticism (Herrero de Jauregui 2010:100-101) or a cult similar to the one in Eleusis. Sacerdos was cremated, and it seems willingly and actively so. This excludes a purely Pythagorean sect, but

being purified by fire was however part of initiation into other mysteries of the Roman era (Liu 2013:74).

4.3.2 The Philiskos obelisk

Neither the architectural form, nor the inscription refer to this tomb as a specific sun symbol.

A conviction of soul ascent may be considered probable, because of the pointed orientation upwards of these tombs.

As stated above, it is a proposition of this work that the cubic structure which serves as a pedestal for the obelisk, is an altar. The sacrality of the joint altar and pyramid implies Philiskos as part of sacral rule in the Nikaia region.

Philiskos' tomb consists of two Platonic solids, the cube and the tetrahedron. The cube is the element of earth and the tetrahedron is the element of fire (Plat. *Ti.* 55a, 56b). Plato says in the *Timaeus*: "Now that which has come into existence must need be of bodily form, visible and tangible; yet without fire nothing could ever become visible, nor tangible without some solidity, nor solid without earth. Hence, in beginning to construct the body of the All/the one heaven/Universe/Cosmos (30b-31a), God was making it of fire and earth" (31b). It is thus possible, from an architectural, mathematical and philosophical viewpoint, to interpret Philiskos' tomb as a representation of the All, or of the creation of Cosmos.

The architectural form of the tomb may thus imply a universal worldview. This philosophical approach to life may have influenced on Philiskos' values and conduct in society. Whether these are Pythagorean, Hermetic, Orphic or strictly Platonic ideas, we do not know, but Middle Platonism's attention on the forms of the *Timaeus*, may be Philiskos' source of inspiration.

4.3.3 The Solitary obelisk

The tomb's alignment to temple C, possibly the temple of Apollo Pythia (Burrell 2004:137; Ritti 2003:188), may indicate a connection to the sun. Apart from being a sun god (Antolín 1996:292; Burkert 1985:120, 336; Thomas and Horace 2011:65), Apollo had according to the Orphic hymn to Apollo Pythia, help from Helios in conquering the snake Python. The rays of Helios, sometimes identified with Apollo himself, made the snake rot (Eisner 1987:146). The obelisk is positioned at the top of the northern hill-side of the narrow valley where the north theatre was placed. In the morning the sun rises over the hilly landscape which borders on the town in the east. The sunlight creeps down and illuminates the north Agora and the Lykos valley, before it slowly starts climbing up the shoulder of the narrow valley. After

approximately half an hour, the sun reaches the tomb, and if crowned with a pyramidion, the sun would have literally lit the obelisk (own observation, fig.38). It would flash back the rays of the sun, like the Sacerdos obelisk, and possibly the Achaïos obelisk, did.

As with all pyramids, the pointed orientation upwards may indicate soul ascent. The alignment with the sacral center of the town, in the vicinity of the entrance to the Underworld, may in some way have lengthened the axis on which the soul ascended.

Since obelisks and pyramids were sacred objects, essentially bearing a cultic significance and originally connected with power (Curran 2009:7-8; Iversen 1968:11), we may assume that the tomb owner partook in sacred rule of Hierapolis, possibly in one of the central cults. The height, the impressive stature and its key location with a view on the entire city, further strengthens this assumption. The alignment may indicate a priesthood connected with temple C. It may additionally imply an imperial priesthood of the Emperor's cult practiced in the Apollo temple complex, although this cult is primarily connected with temple A and B (Bejor 1991:53 no. 24, tav. 28; Burrell 2004:136; D'Andria 2013:191; Ritti 2003:186-188, 214 fig.4).

The Solitary obelisk is an approximately 15 m tall tetrahedron, a Platonic solid associated with the element of fire, the sharpest and fiercest of the elements, a creative force in cosmic generation. It is made up of equilateral, isosceles (two sides of equal length) and scalene (three unequal sides) triangles. Such triangles have a place in Plutarchic Middle Platonism as representing respectively God, daimones and men (Plutarch *De def.or.* 13.33). It is possible that the tomb owner advocated the human values that a universal understanding of the world implied, according to such Middle Platonic and/or Orphic thought.

4.3.4 Summary

The three obelisks of Asia Minor most certainly may reflect a common symbology and a similar belief pattern to that of other tall, monumental pyramidal tombs of the Mediterranean area. It is both a strength and a weakness with Triebel's proposition that it is very general in its set of criteria. The five areas of proposed common symbology seem wholly or partly to be valid for all the tombs of this work's material, depending on how the symbolic and religious expression is interpreted by the researcher. The author's interpretation is thus only one of more possible interpretations, since the understanding of religious and cultic symbology differ widely. Nevertheless, Triebel's proposition enables the researcher of monumental pyramidal tombs to discuss differences and similarities between these tombs in a long durée perspective. Independent of the similarities, the three obelisks of Asia Minor differ from the other pyramidal tombs in that they have been termed both pyramids and obelisks. They were all tall, and two

of them, possibly all three, were triangular. The next part of this study will focus on these three tombs and their significance in society. The cultic affiliations and belief patterns suggested by Merkelbach for the Nikaian tombs, will be discussed further for all three tombs.

4.4 Theoretical propositions of cultic significance for the Nikaian obelisks

4.4.1 The Sacerdos obelisk

Merkelbach's interpretations are mainly founded on the Sacerdos inscription. Based on line four in 09/05/05, τελετᾶς οὐρανίδος ζάκορον (priest of the heavenly rites), Merkelbach suggests that Sacerdos is a priest in the cult of Helios, Sarapis or Helios-Sarapis. It is unclear why Merkelbach involves Sarapis-cult as a possibility. The Egyptian origin of such monuments, may have led him to assume such a cultic affiliation, and rightly it should be noted that monuments documenting cults to Helios-Sarapis, Zeus-Helios-Sarapis and Zeus-Helios-Sarapis and Isis, are numerous (Kater-Sibbes 1973:70, 526, 802, 811, 829, 948). As an alternative to Helios-Sarapis, Merkelbach suggests a priesthood within the Emperor's cult for Sacerdos (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:09/09/05, comm. line 4). More than speaking of alternatives excluding each other, it is probable that Sacerdos held more religious offices. A combination of the priesthood of *archiereus* with other priesthoods, is seen repeatedly, like in Aphrodisias where the link between the Emperor's cult and Dionysiac cult is strong, and more priests had offices as *archiereus* of the emperor and of Dionysos (Quandt 1913:189). There is thus no reason to believe that Sacerdos had only one priestly office.

Merkelbach (1987:33-34) interprets the many cosmic references in the inscription as an expression of ancient star mystique, elsewhere referred to as astral immortality. In fact he states that with "tombs built as obelisks, there was doubtlessly a hope for astral immortality" (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159).

As to astral immortality, this seems to be a concept linked with the harmony of the spheres and Pythagoreanism (Burkert 1972:350-368). The concept may have originated as a Pythagorean tradition involving shamanistic knowledge of cosmos and soul, but with scientific advancement of the time, a Platonic and Aristotelian understanding of astral immortality developed, in which the human soul was of celestial/aethereal substance that would return to the stars and/or to other heavenly bodies after death (Plato *Ti.* 32 b-c, 40d). The concept is also linked with Apollo, since he was considered the origin and the center of universal harmony (Seznec 1995:142).

Such a belief is exemplified in a late Roman funerary inscription on a small obelisk from Afrodisias, where Asklepiodotos “wird mit den sternchen im umlauf gedreht” (Merkelbach and Stauber 1998:02/09/06). Many returned to divine, fiery aether, the highest, purest part of the atmosphere, a place between heaven and earth (Wypustek 2012:42, 43-46, 50, 52, 57-58, 64), an example coming from a funerary inscription in 2nd century AD Smyrna describing how “...from my chest, like a gust of wind, my soul rushed to the aether” (Wypustek 2012:131). This understanding became canonical and this agreement of science and religion, emphasized by the Stoics, obviously made a tremendous impression on the Romans (Burkert 1972:368). Still, more than astral immortality, these tombs seem to convey a message of the deceased’s unity with Cosmos.

From the numismatic material⁵ and from dedications, Zeus, Dionysos, Demeter and Apollo seem to be the main deities of Nikaia. Sarapis is recorded in the numismatic material, but not in dedications. Since the ancient town of Nikaia is not excavated, these assumptions are uncertain. Demeter-cult combined with Emperor’s cult is documented in a 3rd century AD papyrus fragment found at Oxyrhynchos (POxy 1612). It says that a Nikaian had started a practice of honouring the emperor through performance of Demeter’s Eleusinian mysteries. These rites were evidently quite similar to the Eleusinian mysteries (Harland 2003:100). Sacerdos’ tomb and the inscription on it show a belonging to the Emperor’s cult and as a hierophant he may have lead a cult similar to that of Eleusis in Nikaia.

Still, numismatic evidence claims Dionysos as the founder of Nikaia (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:23; Merkelbach and Blümel 1996b:269-272, 279-80). Thus, Sacerdos as a hierophant of Dionysos may be considered just as likely. The mystery cult of Dionysos in Nikaia is attested for example in a 3rd century AD tomb inscription:

οὗτος ὁ τύμβος ἔχι | Ἐπίκτητον τὸν πᾶσι | ποθητὸν vac. Υἱέα [Οὐ]λήρας καὶ
 Ἀσκληπιά[δου], || γεγαῶτα ἀρχιμύσ[την] | Βάκχου Μεγάλου [. . .]ος λῆψεν γαμετῆ[ν — —
 —] | χιλ[— — —] | [— — —] (Sahin 1979 Inschr.1324)

This tomb holds Epiktetos, mourned by all, son of Vera and Asklepiades, chief-initiate (*archimystēs*) of great Bacchos (i.e. Dionysos), who . . . left behind his wife. . .

(Translation by: Harland)

⁵ <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/bithynia/nicaea/i.html>

The tomb, a marble slab (90 x 45 x 20 cm), has a triangular top.

The wording of the Sacerdos-inscription, with its cosmic, heavenly and starry references would fit an Orphic affiliation. The Orphic hymn to Fire, for example, has similar cosmic references:

Αἰθέρος, θυμίαμα κρόκον.

Ἦ Διὸς ὑψιμέλαθρον ἔχων κράτος αἰὲν ἀτειρές,
ἄστρον ἡελίου τε σεληναίης τε μέρισμα,
πανδαμάτωρ, πυρίπνου, πᾶσι ζωῶσιν ἔναυσμα,
ὑψιφανὴς Αἰθήρ, κόσμου στοιχεῖον ἄριστον,
ἀγλαὸν ὦ βλάστημα, σελασφόρον, ἀστεροφεγγές,
κυκλήσκων λίτομαί σε κεκραμένον εὐδίων εἶναι.

TO FIRE [AITHIR; Gr. Αἰθήρ]

O Ever untam'd Fire, who reign'st on high
In Jove's dominions ruler of the sky;
The glorious sun with dazzling lustre bright,
And moon and stars from thee derive their light;
All taming pow'r, Aithirial shining fire,
Whose vivid blasts the heat of life inspire:
The world's best element, light-bearing pow'r,
With starry radiance shining, splendid flow'r,
O hear my suppliant pray'r, and may
Thy frame be ever innocent, serene, and tame.
(*The Orphic hymns*, transl. Taylor 1824)

4.4.2 The Philiskos obelisk

In the inscription on the Philiskos obelisk there is no indication of cultic affiliation. Therefore, presumptions must be made based on the form of the two composites of the tomb, and partly on the identity of the tomb owner. The cubic, lower part of the monument bears a resemblance to the altar of Zeus, depicted on Nikaian bronzes during the reign of Nero and Antoninus Pius (Cook 1964:1099). This of course does not necessarily imply that the tomb owner is connected to Zeus, but it is worth considering. On counting dedications to gods in Nikaia and the surrounding area, Zeus is by far the predominant deity. 75 of 94 dedications are to Zeus, that

is 79,7 per cent. Most are dedicated to Zeus Bronton, a local fertility deity assimilated with Zeus (table 2). Furthermore the cult to Zeus is documented in the whole ancient territory of Nikaia (Şahin 1999:219, 221). Zeus Astrapaïos (the lightning thrower) is known in the region from inscriptions. Astrapios is not an angry Zeus, he is the friendly one, leaving a gleam on the sky in the distance during the thunderstorm (Şahin 1999:222). As the storm brings life, the other local variants of Zeus had the same function: Bronton was agrarian, Agathios was generous and honorable and Bennios had to do with fertility and weather. On the coins with the altar of Zeus, we see Zeus Litaïos, Litaïos being a local epithet, meaning ‘hearing prayer’. Generally in this area Zeus was worshipped as the helper of growth of the field fruits. In antiquity, as today, agriculture was the main source of income, and west of Nikaia, where we find the Philiskos tomb, there is evidence of grand, landed estates (Şahin 1999:222-223). The upper part of the tomb gives the impression of the monument communicating with cosmic or heavenly forces (fig.25). The Orphic hymn to Zeus Astrapios has a communicative tone.

Διὸς Ἀστραπαίου, θυμίαμα λιβανομάνναν.

Κικλήσκω μέγαν, ἄγνόν, ἐρισμάραγον, περίφαντον,
 ἄεριον, φλογόεντα, πυρίδρομον, ἀεροφεγγῇ,
 ἀστράπτοντα σέλας νεφέων παταγοδρόμωι αὐδῇι,
 φρικώδη, βαρύμηνιν, ἀνίκητον θεὸν ἄγνόν,
 ἀστραπαῖον Δία, παγγενέτην, βασιλῆα μέγιστον,
 εὐμενέοντα φέρειν γλυκερὴν βιότοιο τελευτήν.

DIOS ASTRAPAIOS, To JOVE, as the AUTHOR of LIGHTNING

I call the mighty, holy, splendid light,
 Aerial, dreadful-sounding, fiery-bright;
 Flaming, aerial-light, with angry voice,
 Lightning thro' lucid clouds with horrid noise.
 Untam'd, to whom resentments dire belong,
 Pure, holy pow'r, all-parent, great and strong:
 Come, and benevolent these rites attend,
 And grant my days a peaceful, blessed end.
 (*The Orphic hymns*, transl. Taylor 1824)

In this passage, which seems to be an invocation of rite, lightning is described as a controllable force to those who do not have dire resentments towards it. It is perceived as pure and creational to those attending the rites.

An Orphic affiliation is possible, since Zeus has an important place in Orphic doctrine. Cassius Philiskos being a priest of Zeus, would additionally match his high position in society.

5 THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS OF CULTIC SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE SOLITARY OBELISK

In the following I shall present a hypothesis of cultic significance for the tomb of the Solitary on more levels in society. The hypothesis shall primarily be based on how the tomb is placed in the landscape, how it is placed in relation to other monumental and religious buildings, and on its triangular form. Deductions will then be discussed comparatively in relation to theories and assumptions for other tall, pyramidal markers and according to the specific religio-political situation of Hierapolis in the actual period.

5.1 Landscape architecture - Cities Built as Images

The placing and the topographical context of monuments and architecture was very important in ancient city planning. Sacred buildings were placed with respect to the city as a whole (Dignas, et al. 2012:3; Gansum, et al. 1997:13), as urban planning was part of politics (things concerning the polis). Anthropologist Joseph Rykwert postulates that ancient town architecture was founded on a cultural perception of divine law (Rykwert 1988:25, 39). This tradition expresses primarily aesthetic concepts of regularity, rationality and order (Bejor 1999:7-8), which in turn may well be indebted to the Pythagorean tradition (Rosenau 1974:12, 21). There is a scholarly tradition of invoking high-level meanings as major forces that generated the layouts of cities and settlements in ancient societies. The high-level meaning related to astrology, cultural schemata, cardinal orientation, worldviews, cosmology, philosophical systems and the domain of the sacred (Rykwert 1988:87). Such meanings are typically esoteric, known or understood by only a few people (Rapoport 1982:221-223). Basic beliefs about the cosmological significance of settlements are stated: there is a parallel between the workings of the heavens and life on earth; the basic link between earth and the cosmos is the *axis mundi*; divination and augury are needed to identify and sanctify sacred space on earth (Smith 2007:30-31). In one interpretive tradition, Rapoport uses Eliade's concepts as a starting point for the identification of a series of architectural and spatial features associated with cosmologically based urban planning. His list includes city walls with gates, orientation to the cardinal directions, vertical markers at the center, open sacred plazas, and tombs in key locations (Smith 2007:31). In Asia Minor the setting of monumental tombs, their topographical and geographical context, is particularly important. Fertile plains constantly alternate with high mountain ranges and thereby "create particular patterns of relations and of isolation...the

traveller learns...in particular how sacred buildings were placed with respect to the city as a whole” (Dignas, et al. 2012:3).

Rapoport emphasizes cultural variation in the use of cosmological concepts in planning and shows how individual cities used one or more of these features. Kevin Lynch developed similar ideas, apparently independently of Eliade. His “theory of magical correspondences” is one of three “normative theories” of urban meaning: “This theory asserts that the form of any permanent settlement should be a magical model of the universe and the gods” (Lynch 1984:73). The “basic form concepts” of this cosmological model are axial lines of procession, encircling enclosure with gates, dominance of up versus down, grid layout, and bilateral symmetry. He suggests that the use of these principles of urban layout reflects certain fundamental social values: “order, stability, dominance, a close and enduring fit between action and form—above all, the negation of time, decay, death, and fearful chaos” (Lynch 1984:79).

5.2 The city of Hierapolis

The orthogonal city plan of Hierapolis was first realized in Hellenistic Hierapolis (Scardozi 2008:31). The general layout changed only slightly up through the following centuries. There was a broad and long *plateia* (direction NW–SE), elongated under Domitian and then marked at both ends by monumental gates (Scardozi 2008:33-34). Already according to the original plan, the grid had at least nine *stenopoi* parallel to the *plateia*, intersected orthogonally by thirty-five more narrow *stenopoi* (D'Andria 2001:99). The northern road towards Tripolis, Sardis, Pergamon and the western coastal cities was already in Hellenistic times flanked with monumental tumulus tombs and then realized as a road necropolis in imperial times (Scardozi 2008:33-34). The necropoleis further surround the city in the east and the south. During the first half of the 2nd century a building programme strongly expanded the city towards north. The projects, carried out during Hadrianic and Antonine rule, included the vast north agora, a probable site for agonistic activity, for example the Apolloneia Pythika Oikoumenika games and gladiatorial games connected with the imperial cult (Rossignani 2008:89). A contemporaneous dating for the north theatre is probable, due primarily to the same orientation as the north agora and the northern baths of the 2nd century AD (D'Andria 2001:104, 106; D'Andria, et al. 2008:77, 86, 89; Scardozi 2008:36-37). With the multifunctional square, what we see is an amplification of the monumental city towards the north. D'Andria points out that the principal public buildings (agora as an open sacred space, theatre, baths) were duplicated in the ‘new’ Hierapolis (D'Andria, et al. 2008:77, 89).

5.3 Hierapolis built as an image?

Hierapolis is placed on a calcareous plateau, and the location is challenging due to the steep limestone slope to the west and the hillside with water-bearing valleys to the east. These natural limitations restrict to some extent the possibilities for urban planning. The axial line of procession is laid in a NW / SE direction, and makes room for the inhabited city to the east. The two monumental gates constitute visual markings for pilgrims and tourists who moved towards the sacred area. The sacred area is located centrally in the grid. The grid layout represents the inhabited area, although only a small portion between the sanctuary and the south theatre, is excavated. The excavated area, at least partly, was inhabited by citizens of the upper social strata, and inscriptions indicate that they were the sacred elite associated with Dionysus- and Apollo cult, as well as with agonistic activity in connection with the Aktian and the Pythian games (Miranda 2003:165; Ritti 2006:103). Roman Hierapolis had no need for a protective wall, but the slope and the hillside make a natural encircling enclosure with the gates. The dominance of up versus down is inherent in the the landscape in and around Hierapolis. There is furthermore a bilateral symmetry, with the 2nd century AD duplication of the principal public buildings (D'Andria, et al. 2008:77). The sacred center does not seem to have been duplicated northwards, but an expansion of the Emperor's cult to the north agora and the finds of statues of divinities (D'Andria 2001:108) may given the agora a strong sacred character.

5.4 The Solitary obelisk as part of the city plan

The tomb of the Solitary is indeed a tomb in a key location, placed isolated as was a trend of 2nd century AD elite tombs in Asia Minor (Berns 2003:156, 159; Hesberg 1992:51). Still, despite its withdrawn position, it was a prominent landmark, and there must have been a continuous visual communication between the monument, the city and its viewers from the city.

According to landscape theory, a landscape consists of a hierarchy of landscape rooms, from major landscape rooms to smaller, subordinate rooms. From a monument, there will often be a view in a specific direction. From an elevated point like a hilltop, the larger room will be the most dominant, and the monument addresses this room (Gansum, et al. 1997:14). Still, a monument can address more rooms contemporaneously, e.g. the immediate area in front of the monument and a remote area in the form of a horizon. Insight denotes where one can see the monument from. Some monuments can be seen from a long distance. Such insight depends on the placing of the tomb, stature, form and silhouetting. When it comes to insight, two perspectives are relevant; the close-up effect and the effect from a distance. Buildings or tombs

that are meant to have a monumental effect on the viewer, may be placed out of consideration of such near- and afar impacts and effects. Architects apply the conceptual terms introvert/extrovert and private/public to describe these phenomena. The terms exclusive and inclusive refer to for example a tomb's relation with other tombs. If the tomb is placed in an area or on a hilltop where there is no space for other tombs, this may under some circumstances be considered an excluding tomb. If, on the other hand, there is a lot of space for more tombs, the tomb is including (Gansum, et al. 1997:15).

From the rather small room dominated by the obelisk, the larger room of the city, the entire valley with the horizon, and (at least) the neighbouring city of Laodicea, were visible. Since the obelisk faces the city from the north, if crowned by a pyramidion, the sun's reflection would light different parts of the city and/or the valley, during the day and throughout the year, depending on the inclination of the rays. The range of the reflection from the obelisk would thus constitute a room in itself.

The obelisk addresses the city room and the horizon from above and horizontally, the heavens vertically and the sanctuary with its alignment. Further, the obelisk addresses the room of the north theatre south-west of the tomb. Because of the obelisk's visibility it has a public character. Only on a personal level, the hypogean tomb chamber, carefully locked with bolted doors and most probably entirely subterranean in antiquity (Sven Ahrens, personal communication 2013), had a private character.

The obelisk could be seen from afar. Its room opens up on the entire valley and it is of conspicuous height and form. From within the city, the obelisk is actually never barred from view (fig.2, 34). From a distance you would notice its impressive stature and its possible reflection of the sun. From close up you would notice its homely privacy, inviting only to the few.

The dimensions and the location of the obelisk within the city plan makes it highly visible. It catches the eye. As such, the tomb is public. It is nevertheless the tomb of the Solitary. As the tomb watches over the city from a distance, its privacy can be viewed publically. Thus, the tomb is both highly public and highly private, extrovert and introvert at the same time.

Around the obelisk, there is a lot of room for other tomb complexes (fig.35). Therefore the tomb is potentially including, but in practice it turned out to be excluding, since it remained solitary.

According to structural and symbolic anthropology any observable manmade phenomenon or act is a product of underlying cultural logic (Barnard and Spencer 2011:679). The placing of the obelisk within the city plan may imply such a logic. In addition to its

communication with the city, the alignment between temple and obelisk, may indicate an imaginary connection between sanctuary and tomb. Furthermore, it is possible to suggest that the tomb links the 'old' and the 'new' town.

If we consider the Apollo sanctuary as the starting point, the obelisk is oriented in a S-N cardinal direction. The town center lacks the vertical marker proposed by Rapaport as an element in cosmologically based urban planning. Still, if the obelisk is, as it may seem, intentionally aligned with temple C, it is possible to see it as an extension of the temple area. Seen in this light, the connecting line and the obelisk, may be considered a vertical marker for official cult.

Cosmological concepts in city planning, expressing certain fundamental social values like order and stability (Lynch 1984:73, 79; Plato *Leg.* 739d-e), may have been an aim also for Hierapolitan architects. Still, the city architects's intentions are difficult to certify. The obelisk's communicative qualities, with the view and the insight, may be due solely to the wishes of the tomb owner and the architect of the obelisk. Nevertheless, it is probable that the place of the obelisk reflected the tomb owner's relation to parts of town and to specific monumental buildings.

5.5 The triangular form

The triangular form of the pyramidal obelisk, is of importance in the interpretation of the significance of the tomb. The form gives information of a symbolical kind, that necessarily will have to be added to the results of the comparison of the material and to the tentative results of the landscape analysis.

To me the triangular form must be seen in connection with the philhellene cultural movement of the Graeco-Roman elite of the 1st - 3rd centuries AD, the Second Sophistic. This was a period in which the philosophical movement of Middle Platonism was strong.

Plato's work the *Timaeus* provided hypotheses in the areas of natural sciences, cosmology, cosmogony and philosophy. These hypotheses had a focus of attention during imperial times, especially within Middle Platonism (Ferguson 2003:333). The cosmogonical tale in the *Timaeus*, accounts that an essentially 'good' and eternal cosmos was created by the *demiurge* (God of creation) from triangles. These triangles, as the principle of fire (Plato *Ti.* 53d, 55a, 56b), formed Platonic bodies, of which the triangular pyramid (the tetrahedron) was the first, strongest and most creative (Mohr 1985:111-112; Plato *Ti.* 54b, 81b-c, 32b). These were the same cosmogonical ideas that Pythagoras, according to Philolaus of Croton, postulated (Huffman 1993:42). The Stoics had the same conception of the central fire, perceived as

indestructable and intelligent, periodically recreating cosmos from conflagration (Frede 2010:71-72; Ferguson 2003:333), but there were cyclical threats to the ‘good’, when the *demiurge* was absent and the triangles were weakened (Mohr 1985:112; Plato *Ti.* 73b, 81c, 82d). In order to recreate order, the triangles had to be strengthened through fighting chaos and disorder. In Plato’s writings there is no monster representing evil or chaos. Only with the most prominent Middle Platonist, Plutarch, *Typhon* is introduced (Turner 2001:43, 373-374). Thus, in Middle Platonism, like with Egyptian religion, Hermetic doctrine and Christianity, the snake had to be fought actively in order to secure stability and ‘good’ order. In cosmos, or in the heavenly sphere, this was the task of Ra/the Pharaoh, the *demiurge* or St. Michael. On an intermediate level subordinate gods, and in particular Apollo, contributed to fight chaos. On an earthly level a man’s best achievement would be, through mathematics, philosophy and a virtuous and just conduct, to understand the ‘good force’ of cosmos in order to behave like it (Burkert 1987:3, 47, 69, 72-73, 85, 151-153).

5.5.1 Possible religio-philosophical connotations of the triangular form

Since the Solitary obelisk has the form of a tetrahedron and it is composed of triangles, this work will tentatively suggest a Platonic worldview as a plausible religio-philosophical conviction for the tomb owner. In the following, the environment and worldview of philosophical paganism, and particularly of what has been termed Platonized Orphism, will be presented in order to set a conditional frame for the cultic milieu that the obelisk may have been a part of.

Orphism experienced a renaissance in the Empire particularly in the 2nd century AD (Dihle 2013:270, 486; Edmonds 2013:24; Guthrie 1993:10; Herrero de Jauregui 2010:73, 79). The Orphic revival and diffusion was most evident in Egypt and in Asia Minor, but notable also in Athens and Rome. Philosophers and writers like Apollonius of Tyana and Apuleius invoked Orpheus’ authority (Herrero de Jauregui 2010:217, 237). With Christianity all religious expression of the Roman Empire was made more explicit in the ‘culture war’ that arose, and the Second Sophistic, as part of this pagan movement, revived ideals of ancient Greece, like the works of Orpheus and Homer (Herrero de Jauregui 2010:79-80). This process creates a category of Orphism that is more sharply defined than ever (Edmonds 2013:27).

In platonized Orphism, Plato’s mathematical doctrines and his belief in the immortality of the soul would mix with Orphic focus on cosmic fire (aether) and the myth of Dionysos as immortalized through Apollo’s cyclic gathering of the pieces of his torn body. In the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos by the Titans, the role of Apollo in gathering the pieces,

probably reflects the influence of Platonic allegorizing on the myth, since Platonists understand the dismemberment as the cosmic process of movement from One to Many, and Apollo, read as a-pollon, not-many, is the principle which restores unity (Plato *Phaedo* 69d; Edmonds 2013:183; Burkert 1987:86; McNicholl 2003:11, 74, 136, 275-276). In the Orphic hymn to Apollo, the principles of the two contrasting gods are united in Apollo himself, as he is presented as Paian Apollo, Bacchic and twofold.

The esoteric essence of mystery cult of an Orphic affiliation shines through in oracles and hymns of the late Empire. The inscription of Oinoanda of the 2nd -3rd century AD (Cline 2011:19-20, 22; Guarducci 1972:346) is an example of the philosophical-religious trend of later Roman paganism:

[α]ὐτοφυῆς ἀδίδακτος ἀμήτωρ, ἀστυφέλικτος,
οὔνομα μὴ χωρῶν, πολώνυμος, ἐν πυρὶ ναίων·
τοῦτο θεός, μικρὰ δὲ θεοῦ μερὶς ἄγγελοι ἡμεῖς.
τοῦτο πευθομένοισι θεοῦ πέρι, ὅστις ὑπάρχει,
Αἰ[θ]έ[ρ]α πανδερκ[ῆ] θε[ὸν] ἔννεπεν, εἰς ὃν ὁρῶντας
ἔυχεσθ' ἠώους πρὸς ἀντολίην ἔσορῶ[ν]τα[ς].

Self-generated, untaught, without-mother, un-moveable,
not using a name, many-named, in-fire-dwelling,
this is God. We angels are a small part of God.

This (reply) to those who inquired about God, who he actually is:

All-seeing Aether is God, (the oracle) said, looking to him

At dawn, pray, gazing towards the east.

(Transl. Cline 2011: 20)

This inscription originated from the Oracle of Apollo at Klaros (Cline 2011: 21-22), an oracle also consulted by Hierapolis for help on many occasions (Ritti 1985:137; 2006:94-99). In the Oracle to Hierapolis, Apollo of Klaros as a matter of fact again mentions Aether as a divine force: “then you offer to Aether and to the deities of heaven an entire lamb...”. The terms, of Orphic and Dionysian nature (Bean 1971:21-22) in the Oinoanda inscription, have parallels in Orphic literature, among them the hymn to Physis by Mesomedes, where self-generation is equally stressed (Cline 2011: 22), and the philosophical tone resembles the Orphic hymn to

Apollo, connecting Apollo with aether, describing him as a producer and bearer of light (Taylor 1824:76-77).

In the inscription, the oracle sees god as Aether, and it seems, the gods of the Pantheon as subordinate angels of the god Aether. In Artemidorus of Ephesos' 2nd century understanding of the Cosmos, Aetherial fire is in company with the Olympian gods. The oracle of Klaros seems to promote a variation of such cosmology, where Aether depends on the Olympian gods (in this case Apollo) to explain his being (Cline 2011:23). The supreme divinity, aether, cannot transcend the gap between heaven and earth without the help of intermediaries, such as angeloi (Cline 2011:24), or daimones.

Such a divine cosmology is comparable to Platonic cosmology as expressed in the *Timaeus*, and especially in *Symposium* (202e), which posited a supreme being served by intermediaries who communicate between the divine and the mundane spheres, all explained in mathematical terms. Middle Platonism stressed the unreachable quality of a supreme deity and the function of daimones in bridging the gap between God and men (Cline 2011:24), again bringing unity to society.

On a more human and on a personal level, Platonic Orphism proclaimed a conviction of immortality of the soul for initiates. These conceptions (e.g. *Phaedrus* 265b) echo the wording of the Orphic hymns:

“But whenever a soul leaves the light of the sun - enter on *the right* where one must if one has kept all (the laws) well and truly. Rejoice at the experience! This you have never before experienced: you have become a god instead of a man. You have fallen as a kid into milk. Hail, hail, as you travel on *the right*, through the holy meadow and groves of Persephone!” (Freeman 1983:6, v 20, Orpheus, from Thurii (Magna Grecia)).

The optimism in face of death for the just, is accordingly found in Plato (*Phaedo* 78b-85b) and the ‘Orphic’ instruction to go to the right, resembles elements of the myth of Er (a citizen of Lydia, Asia Minor) in Plato’s book 10 of *the Republic*, in detail and in essence: in the Underworld, the just souls deservedly avoid Tartarus and *go right* instead of left through a hole in the underworldly heaven. Then: “after spending seven days in the meadow, the souls that had returned from the journey of a thousand years rose up and departed, accompanied by Er. On the fourth day they reached a place from which they beheld a straight light, like a pillar, stretching through all Heaven and Earth...” (Plato *The Republic* book X, 616b – 617d).

Initiation into ordering cults with a cosmogonical essence, such as The Eleusinian mysteries or the Orphic Mysteries, demonstrate the same wish for world order (Edmonds 2013:163-72, 195-248), as do the works of Plato (McGahey 1994: 48-49). Plato had, in fact, what can be viewed as a recipe for ideal conduct (Ferguson 2003:333), with regard to unity in society.

On a soteriological level, ideal conduct is described, also in connection with initiation, in the *Phaedo*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium*, *Book X* of the *Republic* and in the *Timaeus*. On an imperial level, the *Republic* and the *Statesman* offer a theory of the ideal state. On a local level the *Laws* present the actual detailed prescriptions for public and private life. On a personal level the *Timaeus* offers a description of and for the ideal statesman (Ferguson 2003:333); Timaeus himself, of Locri, represented the ideal statesman, whether real or fictive. He is the unity of virtue and knowledge, an imitation of a benevolent cosmos: “For our friend is a native of a most well-governed State, Italian Locris, and inferior to none of its citizens either in property or in rank; and not only has he occupied the highest offices and posts of honor in his State, but he has also attained, in my opinion, the very summit of eminence in all branches of philosophy (Plato *Ti.* 20a). As sum these ideals all provide the starting point for the Platonic worldview, widespread in the Roman world.

5.5.2 Cities of contrasting principles - The probability of Orphism in Hierapolis

There is no archaeological evidence of Orphism in Hierapolis, but then again it is a religious affiliation which in essence is secretive. The Hierapolitan patron god Apollo Archegetes-Pythios (Ritti and Ceylan 1997:59-61) is, as his name indicates, definitely conceived as a clone of the great, Delphic Apollo (Versnel 2011:75). There are in fact strong similarities between Delphi and Hierapolis, and the cult of Delphi is put in connection with Orphism (McNicholl 2003:113, Plutarch *De Iside* 365a; Robertson 2005:223; Taylor 1824:76). It is thus justified to tentatively postulate Orphism as one cultic affiliation for Hierapolis. Delphi was originally a shrine for *Gaia* (Earth), where Apollo slew the Python (snake), and so claimed Delphi as his own shrine. The Pythia (prophetess) was maintained, but transformed into the Oracle of Delphi - the mouthpiece of Apollo (McNicholl 2003: 113). Likewise, in Hierapolis, Apollo to a large extent took over the earlier predominance of Meter/Kybele, who was the first deity in Hierapolis to have her cult centered on the entrance to the Underworld (Ritti 1985:137; Ritti 2006:132; Piccardi and Masse 2007:98). Her cult, as in Delphi, persisted (Ritti 2006:130-33) alongside the cult of the patron deity Apollo. As in Delphi the fault chasm was the dwelling of the snake Python (Acts of Philip IX 107-113 (James 1924); Ogden 2013:46; Piccardi and

Masse 2007:98).⁶ The myth of Apollo's battle against Python is clearly linked with Delphi, but had a foothold in Phrygian Hierapolis and Gryneion in the territory of Myrina, as well (Fontenrose 1980:79, 95-96; Huttner 2013:357; Weber 1910:178, fig.1). Apollo's function as law-giver and arbitrator (McNicholl 2003 :77) through oracle is apparent in both cities. Another aspect which the two cities share, is the strong focus on the myth of the birth of Apollo and Artemis by Leto, which, according to Herodot, would link both cities to the Hyperborean myth (Bridgman 2004:20-21, 37; Richardson 2010:81).

In Delphi, Apollo and Dionysos are main deities. The honours of cult were divided between the brothers (Kerényi 1996:216-217, 233-234). Apollo held sway in spring and summer, and Dionysos in winter while Apollo was away (Liritzis and Castro 2013:184-206; McGahey 1994:9). As documented from the finds (see 6.1.3 and 6.1.4), these gods had a central position in Hierapolitan religious life, as well. The similarities between Delphi and Hierapolis may imply a similar twofold division between Apollo and Dionysos in Hierapolis.

Orphism had its followers in major cities with which Hierapolis associated. In Ephesos, Dionysos Bakcheios was privately worshipped by the upper-class already by the 5th century BC while others of the same social milieu had an orientation towards Orphism and Pythagoreanism (Bremmer 2003:20; 2008:37-53). The deities central to Orphic myth are all deities central in Hierapolitan cult and religion, and in fact Strabo and Diodorus report an allegedly Phrygian origin for Orphism (Herrero de Jauregui 2010:68, 75, 150; Scibona 1982:552; Strabo *Geogr.* Vol.II, 10.3.16). According to Dihle (2013:270) and Wypustek (2012:110), what survives of Orphic poetry from the 1st – 4th century AD, is assumed mostly to have been composed in Asia Minor. In a Phrygian rapprochement between the Olympian principle Apollo and the chthonic principle Dionysos (Bernstock 1991:xxi; Guthrie 1993:218; McNicholl 2003:82, 113), Orpheus was a hybrid figure of the two, mediating between opposite principles (Strauss 1966:220). In Orphism, the fusion of the opposite principles resulted in a taming of frenzied rites, strengthening the aspects of soteriological hope and philosophical knowledge (Bianchi and Vermaseren 1982:823). Phrygia, where all three cults were well rooted through age and tradition, was their meeting point (McGahey 1994:11, 26). Could it be that the Solitary tomb constituted a part of such a religious milieu?

⁶ Or Echidna, Python's sister-wife

6 THE PLACE OF THE OBELISK TOMB

The Solitary obelisk is placed where it has a perspective view of the city (fig.33). It addresses more rooms, or spaces. Most likely the tomb addressed both physical and metaphysical rooms. It is further proposed here that these spaces are interconnected through a cultural logic which had a meaning to the tomb owner and those with which he associated culturally and ideologically.

In the following it is the intention to present the different rooms, or spaces, which the obelisk addresses. They will be considered as follows:

- 6.1 the link to the old city (sacred space)
- 6.2 the city as one unit (public space)
- 6.3. as part of the new city (local space)
- 6.4. the tomb's immediate surroundings (immediate space)
- 6.5. the alignment and the proposed link with the Underworld (intermediate space)

Subsequent to the presentation, the obelisk's relation to its spaces, and the possible interpretations of the tomb owner's identity that these relations may imply, will be considered. The tomb's triangular form is considered within this interpretation.

6.1 The link to the old city (sacred space)

6.1.1 The Sanctuary

In Hierapolis, the processional road led to the sanctuary of the patron deity of Hierapolis, Apollo. His sanctuary constituted the 'heart' of the town, and his importance in the city and in the sacred area, was strong to the point that the area between the Apollo sanctuary and the Plutonion sanctuary may be considered as a *hieron tou Apollonos* (D'Andria 2013:191). Although evidence is not conclusive on all points, and reservations should be made (Tullia Ritti, personal communication 2014), Temples A, B and C (fig.32) all may have had an Apolline connection (Burrell 2004:135-137; D'Andria 2013:188; Ritti 2003:188; Semeraro 2012:304). During Hellenistic rule, temple A of Apollo *Kareios* was constructed on older foundations (D'Andria 2013:186; Semeraro 2008:foglio 33 bis, fig. 2, 106). The main temple of Apollo is Temple B, a temple which was systematically destroyed along with temple C, during the 5th century AD, in a phase of strong affirmation of Christianity. Analyses of the temple foundation confirm that temple B is a hexastyle temple of a Ionic order, like the main

temple depicted on Hierapolitan coins (Semeraro 2008:117; 2012:300). The northernmost temple, temple C, is dated to the first part of the 1st century AD. Its divine dedication is highly uncertain, but also this temple can be connected to the mantic activity prevalent at the sanctuary (Semeraro 2008:117; 2012:304). Numismatic evidence indicate it as a temple of Apollo Pythia, in Hierapolis demonstrated through the most important games of the town; the Apolloneia Pythia (Burrell 2004:137; Ritti 2003:188; Travaglini and Camilleri 2010:18, 22). It has a small, vaulted subterranean chamber (hypogeum), maybe similar to the crypt of the Clarian oracular priest of Apollo (Bonnechere 2004:185 note 36). Such subterranean vaults in Apollonian oracular temples are documented elsewhere (Leclerc 2008:117-128), but they are also found in connection with Kybele cult, as in Aizanoi (Burrell 2004:117). All three temples were completed in Julio-Claudian times (Scardozzi 2008:33-34). They all face southwest, as does the Solitary tomb.

Based on representations of the three temples on coins issued in town (Ritti 2003:187), scholars agree that the central temple (B) is the one dedicated to the imperial cult from the early 3rd century AD. As attested elsewhere (Price 1984:103), the imperial cult is merged with the cult of the leading deity in Hierapolis, and the emperor shared the temple with Apollo (Burrell 2004:135-136; D'Andria 2013:191; Ritti 2003:186-188, 214 fig. 4, 5a, 5b). This amalgamation of the two leading cults of the city, seems to have started already with the first emperors to have contact with the client city, since the temple to the right on the coins (temple A of Apollo *Kareios*) is hypothesized as the temple possibly functioning as a temple for the imperial cult of Julio-Claudian times (Ritti 2003:178-179, 188).

The exact location of the entrance to the Underworld, the *Plutonion*, is now established by the finds in 2012-2013 of a dedicatory inscription to Pluto and Kore on the arch above a gas-filled cavern (D'Andria 2013:173). Cults connected with Pluto's rape of Demeter's daughter Kore (Persephone) had a natural place in the area around the entrance. Centrally placed in the sanctuary's *theatron*, a colossal statue of Pluto/Hades-Sarapis with attributes of Zeus was found. Statues of *Cerberus* and a coiled serpent were found immediately below the *theatron* (D'Andria 2013:189-191; Rasmus Brandt, personal communication 2014)(fig.44).

Gas is additionally seeping out of other openings in the area, related also to the mantic activities of the Apollo cult. Connected to the southern longwall of temple A of Apollo *Kareios*, the deity of the alphabetical oracle of town, there is an opening down to a gas-filled well on the seismic chasm (Piccardi and Masse 2007:98). This entrance was for long considered as the *Plutonion* itself (D'Andria 2013:188; Scardozzi 2008:34). In the *cella* of the same temple a *bothros* was dug in the travertine floor to connect with the seismic crevice under the temple.

This passage established the communication between oracle and the subterranean deities (D'Andria 2013:185). Temple C is founded on the same seismic crack as temple A, and the fracture in the subterranean chamber where the gas seeps out has been worked by man (Semeraro 2012:304). The Apollo sanctuary is approximately 70 meters northeast of the newly found Plutonium, and it seems that sanctuaries of this sacred area predominantly founded its ritual activity on a connection with the Underworld. *Bothroi* were employed in cults of the underworldly gods, daimones, heroes and the dead. Such chthonic cults are found in other oracular sites of Asia Minor, as in Didyma, Klaros and Kyzikos (Aune 1991:27-28; Bonnechere 2010:156; Edmonds 2004:146; Fontenrose 1988:39, 159; Price 1984:155).

Greek sanctuaries were often complex areas which included not only a temple to the chief deity of the sanctuary, but also a variety of buildings and monuments to other deities (Price 1984:146). From the numismatic material (Travaglini and Camilleri 2010:18, 21) and from the oracle of Klaros, we know that a cult centered on Demeter (Deo) and on the rape of Persephone had importance all through the imperial period. This is only natural due to the entrance to the Underworld. Owing to the same phenomenon of nature, it is quite evident that Pluto/Hades-Serapis and Isis were worshipped here in imperial times, and Cybele/Meter from even earlier (Pio Panarelli, personal communication 2013; Piccardi and Masse 2007:98; Ritti 1985:137; 2006:132; Travaglini and Camilleri 2010:19, 21).

From inscriptions, coins and relief panels, we know that Dionysos had an important place in local cult (D'Andria 2001:110-111; Miranda 2003:165-167; Price 2005:124; Ritti 2006:103). We know from a decree to Myndios, that also Zeus had a temple, most probably in the central sanctuary area. His wife was a priestess of "The twelve Gods", another sanctuary of importance (Ritti 2001:495-497; 2006:159-165).

All these gods, Greek and Egyptian, had key positions in Hierapolitan religious life. Over the years they seem to have been put together in the sanctuary area as a family, all deities having either direct family ties, shared attributes or connections due to cultural transfers typical of the Second Sophistic (Burkert 1987:6, 49), like that of Plutarch in *Of Isis and Osiris* or of Aristides in *Sarapis hymn 29*.

Religious life in Hierapolis was complex and it lies outside frameworks of this study to penetrate further into this field of problems. It is nevertheless expedient to take a look at some of the more prominent cults of the city, since the obelisk may have had a cultic connection with the main deities of the sacral center. The focus here will be on the cults connected with the abduction of Kore, and with Dionysos and Apollo. This delimitation is done based on these deities' predominance in the archaeological, numismatic and epigraphic material. By this it is

not meant that for example the Egyptian cults were of little importance, because they were very much so (Bejor 1984). Still, they will be given little attention in the present study.

6.1.2 Demeter and Kore as ordering deities

As in other places where we find the entrance to the Underworld (Jost 2005:152), Demeter and Kore were worshipped in Hierapolis. The strong tradition of the cult, is confirmed by the reliefs in the theatre (Newby 2003:206-208; Ritti 1985:9-10, 177-180), by coins and by the oracle of Klaros, where the cult is described as habitual (Price 2005:119, 124; Ritti 2006:96).

It is not difficult to imagine the rites, or the *drama mysticon* in Hierapolis :“For Kore was carried off by Pluto, that is, the sun going; down beneath the earth at seedtime” (Porph. *On Images*, fragm.7)(fig.41). Seed-time is mentioned by Porphyry as the time for Kore’s abduction, and in Syracuse the greek historian Diodorus says that Pluto abducted Kore, having split the earth, and descended into Hades with her, only to return for the festival when the fruit of the grain was about to reach ripeness in May (Diodorus *Bibl. Hist.* V 4.2). There is of course a close connection between these rites and the communities’ strong dependence on agricultural surplus for survival and/or wealth (Sourvinou-Inwood 2005:30, 35, 38-40). Kore being lost represented the most terrible crisis imaginable, the crops’ failure to grow threatened mankind’s survival. Upon finding her, the crisis was overcome and order in agriculture was reestablished (Cole 2004:9; Miranda 2003:169; Newby 2003:206-208; Robertson 2005:230-231; Sourvinou-Inwood 2005:30-32, 39-40). Although the citizens of Hierapolis themselves would not directly depend on grain-production for their wealth, they relied upon neighbouring communities’ produce. It is not improbable that nearby landowning communities made pilgrimages to Hierapolis, the city where Pluto and Kore ruled the underworld and controlled agricultural success.

6.1.3 Dionysos in Hierapolis – Lose thyself

Dionysos had a natural place in Hierapolis, where grapes were grown all the way to the rural sanctuary of Apollo *Lairbenos* (Thonemann 2011:194-95). Vitruvius speaks of the vineyards around Hierapolis in antiquity. The traveller Arundell in 1826 commented that they were completely in the territory of Bacchus (Huttner 2013:21; Thonemann 2011:193-195). Dionysos cult was probably introduced with Pergamene rule. Later, the god is documented on numerous coins with Claudius, but most testimonies of pronounced cult in Phrygia part from Hadrian onwards (Miranda 2003:167). A bust of Dionysos was found in 1970 in the northern baths and a white marble base with a dedication to Dionysos *Kathegemon* (the leader – guide of the

people) was found in the excavated living area between the south theatre and the Apollo sanctuary. It is dated to the 2nd century AD. The dedicand, a hierophant, was Ambivius Frugianus. Ambivius was diffused as a Roman name of the upper class in Milet and the family spread to Hierapolis in the 2nd or 1st century BC. The inscription is testimony of the celebration of mysteries in Hierapolis, as the title of *Hierophant* has been transmitted from the Eleusinian cult onto other mystery cults, as in this case the cult of Dionysos (Miranda 2003:165-166).

Dionysiac cult continued into the 3rd century (Miranda 2003:170), as we see evidenced on panels from the theatre. A Dionysiac agonistic festival in the presence of the Severans is shown in reliefs (D'Andria 2001:110-111; Price 2005:124) (fig.45). If we look at the panels from the theatre, we see the god's official role in connection with the imperial house. At the same time we see his wild side, his frenzied procession of dancers, a woman carrying a figurine of a deity, fauns, and wild, feline beasts charging at the participants. His role may have had the dual character as described in the Orphic hymn to Bacchus (Dionysos), where he is depicted as two-fold and two-formed, both a fanatic, bull-faced god, at the same time pure, "endowed with counsel prudent and divine". His two-fold nature, being both representative and untamed, is typical of the Orphic Dionysos (Strauss 1966:219-220), and from an anthropological viewpoint expresses the dual character of nature, myth and man himself (Lévi-Strauss 1977:162-163). His mad and frenzied rites were necessary for purification (Colombo 1982 :312-313). In the Orphic hymn to Dionysos, he was an immortal daemon, *aeon* (life, for eternity) and "of Jove and Proserpine, occultly born" (from a translation by Taylor 1824). Despite his untamed nature, the cult of Dionysos is an upper class phenomenon, in Roman times often connected with imperial names (Miranda 2003:166-167; Price 1984:120; Wachter 1987:759). By the 2nd century AD, we see both eschatological concerns and concerns of fertility and rebirth in Dionysos cult (Graf 2004:252-253; Graf and Iles 2007:201). This is again linked to the Orphic myth of how the Titans (disorder) tore Dionysos apart, only to be put together and buried by Apollo (order). Dionysos' rebirth would concur with Apollo's annual leave for the Hyperborean (McNicholl 2003:79; Plutarch *De Is. et Os.* 365a; Robertson 2005:223-226). Dionysos Kathegemon had a founder-god role, like Apollo Archegetes of the Seleucids. In Hierapolis the two founder gods seem to have been equally welcomed (Miranda 2003:168, 170) and found their places in harmonic coexistence, balancing two opposite principles.

6.1.4 Apollo in Hierapolis – Know thyself

Apollo is documented in Hierapolis by the temples, the alphabetical oracle, from panels in the south theatre, from the statuary (fig.40), numismatic (Travaglini and Camilleri 2010:16, 19, 20) and inscriptional material, as well as in myth. His nature is strict, ordering, taming, purifying and sound (D'Andria 2003:166-168; Price 2005:96; Ritti 2006:167-171; Thonemann 2011:157; Thonemann 2013:91, 161 n.61).

The cycle of Apollo from the theatre panels (D'Andria 2003:161-171) shows a punishing Apollo. Marsyas' disrespect cannot be tolerated and the flaying of him restores order (fig.43). The restoration of order and the warding off of catastrophe is also shown on the panels, connected with the pestilence that ravaged the Roman empire (D'Andria 2003:168) between AD 165-170. Apollo *Kareios* and Apollo Archegetes of Hierapolis, usually managed crises themselves, but this specific pestilence required particular consultation and the local Apollo got oracular aid from the oracle of Apollo Klaros (Graf 2008:75-76; Huttner 2013:139; Ritti 2006:94-99; Versnel 2011:74). The oracle of Klaros was according to itself a help to Hierapolis on many occasions, and superior to Apollo *Kareios* in times of threat. Apollo Klaros commanded that sacred images of himself should guard all the gates of Hierapolis and that when the evil forces of the dead were tranquillised, women and children should be sent to Klaros accompanied with libations and hecatombs (Ritti 1985:137; 2006:94-99). Apollo clearly had the role of restoring order and as a purifier.

The most prominent feature of the Apollo cycle panels of the south theatre, was the mythical birth of Apollo and Artemis at Ephesos by Leto (fig.42). Statues of the three together, from the south theatre, are in the museum (Bejor 1991:8-15). According to Herodot, the saga of Leto, and the birth of Apollo and Artemis by her (Bridgman 2004:20-21, 37), was closely linked with the Hyperborean myth. The Hyperborean myth, is connected with typically Delphic rites and the advent festivals of Apollo, Dionysos and Demeter/Kore, the main deities involved in such rituals of (re-)arrival and alternating presence (Sourvinou-Inwood 2005:32). Upon Apollo's return from the Hyperborean (North), he slayed the serpent of Chaos (Python) (Robertson 2005:223-225; 2010:244) and buried Dionysos. The myth of the Python combat was localized also in Hierapolis and in the territory of Myrina, and in these regions the Typhon combat, an Egyptian parallel myth (Plutarch *De Is. et Os.* book V, 355a-f, 356a, 373c, 373f-374a), was also placed in local traditions (Fontenrose 1980:79; Huttner 2013:357; Weber 1910:178, fig.1). In Delphi, according to the Orphic story of Demeter's prophecy to Kore, the return of Apollo coincided with the very moment of Persephone's rising from the earth (Robertson 2010:104). This incident further converged with the Thargelia, a festival of

purification and fertility common to all Ionians. Scapegoats (*pharmakoi* – often criminals) were ritually driven out of the city on the sixth Thargelion, as an act of cleansing the city from evil (Graf 2008:76-77; Iddeng 2012:17). On the seventh Thargelion, the day of renewal and plenty, and Apollo's and Plato's birthday (Benson 2008:1; Graf 2008:76; Greswell 1862:33-34; Hornblower, et al. 2012:234), new fire was brought in from the sacred hearth at Delphi. This fire was used to rekindle the public hearth in the *prytaneion*, from which the private households in their turn, got their own new fire, as did the temples (Graf 2008:76-77).

6.1.5 Interpretation of the tomb owner's identity related to sacred space

Merkelbach's suggestions for Sacerdos are of a priest in the cult of Helios, Sarapis or Helios-Sarapis. Alternatively he suggests a priesthood within the Emperor's cult. Astral immortality "was doubtlessly a hope for obelisk tomb owners" (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:159). In Hierapolis a statue verifies a cult of Zeus-Pluto-Sarapis, replacing Helios with Pluto (Bejor 1984:59-65; D'Andria 2013:189-191; Gasparro 2007:64-65). Zeus-Pluto-Sarapis is documented elsewhere in Phrygia (Kater-Sibbes 1973:649; Wypustek 2012:111). Still, Sarapis seems to be connected with the *Plutonion* and not with temple C, to which the tomb is aligned. Helios is not documented through archaeological finds in Hierapolis, but Apollo as a sun god would satisfy the same symbolical link to the obelisk as a monument connected with sun cult. Given the proof of established and longlasting Emperor cult in Hierapolis, and the stature and the placing of the obelisk tomb, it is probable that the owner was part of the elite which practiced Emperor's cult as part of their own self-representation or identity-building. Merkelbach's last proposition for cultic affiliation, is the hope for astral immortality. The triangular form, more than astral immortality, implies a cosmic world view where aether, or fire, is the central principle. I should therefore propose the tomb owner as a sacral ruler of one or more cults practiced at the sacred center.

6.2 The city as one unit (public space)

The Eastern Roman Empire was an empire of cities. The administration of these cities entered into the administration of the Empire itself. Thus, the Empire depended on the willingness and eagerness of local cities and elites to govern on behalf of their rulers. An important tool to such government was cult (Dignas 2002:8-9; Price 1984:21, 233, 248; Várhelyi 2010:122, 128-129). As a Roman city in Asia Minor, Phrygian Hierapolis enters into this 'web' of imperial government. Through thoughts and ideas of Middle Platonism and the Second Sophistic, the principles of ideal and eternal rule became a characteristic of the Roman elite, legitimized

through reason of a Pythagoreanized Platonic logic, often combined with stoicism (Gill 2007:189-209). The imperial cult enhanced the dominance of local, politico-religious elites over the populace and it was a major part of the web of power that formed the fabric of Roman society (Price 1984:248).

From inscriptions we know that city administration in Hierapolis consisted of a Citizens' Assembly and a *boulé*, which by imperial times had taken on a hereditary character (Ritti 2006:28). A certain number of magistrates had executive power. Besides the *Gerusia* had some saying. Priests and officials organized the official cults and the sacred ceremonies. Wealthy citizens made themselves deserving of the political posts through a system of benefaction, which consisted of donations, banquets, organization of games, building programmes, gifts to the sanctuaries and ambassadorial missions. Some Hierapolitans even entered into the equestrian and senatorial orders. These upper class honours were a result of personal and constant loyalty to the emperor (Ritti 2006:28-29).

An example of the Hierapolitan elite of the 2nd century AD, is Tiberius Iulius Myndios, a *sacerdos* of Zeus, known through inscriptions incorporated into the *diázoma* of the theatre and from a letter (AD 117) from Hadrian to the magistrates, the *Boulé* and the demos of Hierapolis (Ritti 2001:489-555; 2006:159-165). As a sign of respect or particular benevolence, the emperor renunciated the city's offer of the *aurum coronarium*. In the same letter he reconfirms the city's prestigious privileges of *asylum*, granted one or more of the city's sanctuaries since the reign of the Hellenistic kings. This act acknowledges the particular religious connotation of the town (Price 2005:123; Ritti 1985:107; 2004:297-340). Hierapolis' direct contact with emperor Hadrian, is the ambassador Iulius Myndios, Philo(...)(Ritti 2001:489-555; 2004:297-340; 2006:156), in head of the congratulatory embassy sent to the emperor in AD 117. It is possible that the rest of the word *Philo*(-----), should be *Philobastos* (loyal to the emperor), an epithet given to, for example, the pious Kouretes in Ephesus from the 1st century AD (Graf 2004:248).

Myndios contributed generously to cultic life as a benefactor in Hierapolis. He donated to the *boule* an annual sum of 4500 denari for religious purposes. In response to this donation, Myndios was granted continued honours, and statues and gilded portraits in the sanctuary of Zeus, of which we do not know the location (Ritti 2006:161, 164). The names of the magistrates who consented to this agreement are listed, giving an insight into the most prominent individuals of the Hadrianic era: Marcus Ulpius Athenagoras (*archon*), Publius Aelius Apollonides Aebutianus (*archon*), Apollonios (son of Theotimos IV and *archon*), Publius Aelius Apollonios Antiochianos (*archon*), Alexandros (son of Alexandros, grandson of

Demetrios and *archon*) (Ritti 2006:159-165). We see that a majority of these men belong to the tribes of the central aisle of the theatre, the Apolloniade tribe (Ritti 2006:116-117).

Hadrian most probably visited Hierapolis in AD 129 when he stopped in Laodicea on his way to Egypt with Severa and Antinous (Ritti 2003:202). Coins of Hadrian and Apollo of AD 129-130 from the Hierapolitan mint,⁷ and statues of the emperor and his wife (Ritti 2003:179)(fig.39), are indications of this visit. Slightly previous, but of the same journey, and of the same year of AD 129, are testimonies of Hadrian's particular benevolence of the Apollo cult in Didyma. He was hailed with the God and took his prophecies, and as a result the oracle had a major upswing. The particular imperial connection with the Apollo cult is further attested through the citizenships issued at the time. A large number of the Aelii citizenships granted by Hadrian to Milet were given to the priests and prophets of Apollo in Didyma (Holtheide 1983:100-101). In comparison with Didyma's twenty-four citizenships, Hierapolis was granted twenty-five in the same period. In the case of Milet/Didyma, it seems that Hadrian created his own clientele of persons connected with the Apollo cult as part of his network (Holtheide 1983:101). The same explanation may be valid for Hierapolis and the large number of Hadrianic citizenships granted there, probably due to his visit in AD 129. We know that more of the Aelii of Hierapolis were both extremely wealthy, directly involved in the rule of the city and of the Apollonide tribe. To exemplify this religio-political elitist group are the sophist Antipatros' family; his (probable) grandfather, High Priest of Asia Publius Aelius Zeuxidemos Cassianus and his (probable) father, Publius Aelius Zeuzidemos Aristos Zenon, advocate of the Treasury of Phrygia and Asia, of senatorial or equestrian order (*IGR* IV 819.9-11; Ritti 2006:142-144; Thonemann 2011:114). Another probable relative of the sophist, P. Aelius Zenon Iulianus, is one of three named *agonothetes* of Hierapolis. Names connected with imperial priesthoods are Tiberius Claudius Zotikos Boas (Ritti 1985:88-89; 2006:144-146, 181-184), Apollonianos, Gaius Ageleius Apollonides (Ritti 2003:196-198, 203), and the Aebutii, who had the office of *Archiereus* of Asia more times (Miranda 2002:39-42, 165; Ritti 2006:78-81). If the Solitary obelisk is contemporaneous with the analogous tombs of Nikaia, the tomb owner should most probably be considered as part of the milieu described above, or a similar elitist milieu.

⁷ from the Jyrki Muona Collection, ex Stack's Bowers and Ponterio sale 173 (NYINC, 11 Jan 2013) lot 5118, ex Hirsch 24 (10 May 1909), lot 1393 and from CNG (Classical numismatic gallery) Auction 70 (9/2005), lot 1007.

6.2.1 Interpretation of the tomb owner's identity related to public space

The tomb being such a visible landmark suggests that the tomb owner was an outstanding citizen, maybe a benefactor who contributed considerably to the city while alive. As part of the elite, he probably would belong to the Emperor's cult. From the Flavian until the Severan dynasty, emperors were at the head of a trend with philosophy taking on characteristics of Eastern and Egyptian religion (Ferguson 1987:758; Várhelyi 2010:18-19). For example the Egyptian model for 'eternal' rule (Curran 2009: 13, 32), combined with Platonic truth of the ordered 'good' society, all explained and well founded in mathematical science (Cuomo 2001; Gow 2010; Kappraff 2000; O'Leary 2010; O'Meara 1989; Tuplin and Rihl 2002), must have seemed like exemplary models for continued aristocratic and successful rule. The Emperor's cult was publicly organized, but we see that it was sometimes blended with already-existing mystery cults of the rich elite (Price 1984:120; Graf 2004:247-8). Associations and priests of ordering cults, were seen as protectors of the towns, possessing the necessary secrets to ensure prosperity, success and wealth. Their rites were seen as being vital for the identity and existence of the city, securing the safety of the community (Graf 2004: 247-8, 250). The direct and indirect contacts between the Hierapolitan elite and the emperor secured order and unity both on an imperial and on a local level. The Greeks who obtained Roman citizenships during Hadrianic and Antonine rule were of the upper social strata, already holding political and religious offices. This elite, partly out of convenience of status in society, accepted citizenship as a token of loyalty towards the Roman empire (Holtheide 1983: 109, 112, 131). This imperial network, legitimized to a large degree on cult and rites conducted by the local elite, united the Empire and guaranteed stability and continuity for the cities.

Around the time of the building of the three obelisks of Asia minor, Hadrian ruled the empire. The Philhellene emperor united the east with the west as the empire was at its largest. Did Hadrian consider himself a philosopher-king of a Platonic sort? He rebuilt the Pantheon in Rome around AD 126, an earthly cosmos imaged on Pythagorean principles (Joost-Gaugier 2007:143, 166-168; MacDonald 2002:13, 88), where he according to Dio Cassius and Aelius Spartianus, sat enthroned as judge and legislator (Joost-gaugier 2007:311, n.14). What was regarded as the geometric perfection of the heavens was reflected in the building and in its self-similar use of geometry and proportions. The three semicircular niches of the rotunda form an equilateral triangle, which apex lies in the niche opposite the entrance, the apse where Hadrian sat, cast geometrically in the role of Apollo (Joost-gaugier 2007:169, 172, 311).

The Nikaian and Hierapolitan tomb owners, most probably were part of a milieu where the emperor was trendsetter. To share the emperor's cultural preferences would enhance the

individual citizen's prestige within a Roman elite stratum of society. Of a religious character, philosophy arose as an elitist path of representation of the individual within the imperial system of administration (Ferguson 1987: 758; Varhelyi 2010: 18-19). As such, both the form and the placing of the Solitary obelisk ideally serves the aim of self-representation. The form is a Platonic solid representing fire, and the choice of place for the Solitary tomb has uniting qualities, overlooking the entire city. If crowned by a pyramidion, it would additionally share its light with everyone. Considering the alignment, it is possible to suggest that the tomb unites the 'old' and the 'new' town, making the tomb owner part of the 2nd century extension northwards, maybe as a benefactor, but still with connection lines back to functions of the old town and the sacred center, maybe as a priest of Apollo. We know that Plato considered Apollo as a unifying force: "Likewise in the case of Apollo, with reference to music we have to understand that alpha often signifies "together," and here it denotes moving together in the heavens about the poles, as we call them, and harmony in song, which is called concord; for, as the ingenious musicians and astronomers tell us, all these things move together by a kind of harmony. And this god directs the harmony, making them all move together, among both gods and men (Plato *Cra.* 404d – 405d). The tomb may well be a marker of this unity, both as unifying the southern and the northern part, and as a cosmic unifying force, as indicated with the 'moving together in the heavens about the poles' (Bridgman 2004:20-21, 37). To Plato, the ideal city, was a city which came as close as possible to unity. Unity constitutes the extreme as regards virtue. Such a city is inhabited by gods or children of gods, and this regime is, in a way, the nearest to immortality and second in point of unity (Plato *Leg.* 739d-e). The tomb owner may have been a citizen who contributed to stability and unity in society.

6.3 As part of the new city (local space)

In antiquity the Solitary obelisk would have distanced 175 m from the *analemma* and 225 m from the centre of the *scaenae frons*, lying ca. 70 m higher in the terrain than the north theatre (D'Andria, et al. 2008:la carta archeologica di Hierapolis di Frigia. In appendix). To the audience of the theatre, the obelisk must have been perceived as part of the cultural and aesthetic experience.

There are examples of noteworthy men being buried near building complexes that they were closely associated with. Greek benefactor Herodes Atticus rebuilt the Panathenaic stadium and constructed a temple to Tyche on the hill above, and when he died in AD. 179, he was buried in the area (Tobin 1993:81-89). Lykian benefactor Opramos represented a considerable funding source for theatrical performances in the city of Rhodiapolis. He had his

tomb placed near the city theatre, indicating a connection between the building and himself. The imposing position of the tomb in the landscape, with a spectacular view of the valley to the south, in addition to the proximity to the theatre, were circumstances meant to guarantee a *Gloria post mortem* for Opramos (Cormack 2004:37). There may be a similar connection between the tomb-owner and the theatre in Hierapolis.

6.3.1 Interpretation of the tomb owner's identity related to local space

The placing of the tomb above the north theatre, quite probably connects the owner to the building, either as an *agonothete*, a considerable benefactor contributing to construction or as a priest connected with the activities typical of the theatre. Dionysos was the god of all theatrical performance, but some theatres had a particularly strong Dionysiac nature. Dionysos temples were for example built near the theatre of Dionysos in Athens and near the Hellenistic theatre in Pergamon (Burrell 2004:34). Building programs during Hadrianic and Antonine reign were often built on an Athenian pattern (Holtheide 1983:92; Mania 2006:187). Hadrian is reported as having served as *agonothete* at the greater Dionysia at Athens in 124/5 (Longfellow 2011:85, 120) and an inspiration from the theatre of Dionysos may have influenced on city planning during his reign. Since the northern part of Hierapolis most probably was built in this period, it is not implausible that the north theatre had such an influence, possibly more accentuated than for the theatre in the southern part of town. As such, in addition to an intention maybe comparable to Atticus' and Opramos', the Solitary obelisk may have had a similar significance as the Athenian choregetic monuments above the Dionysic theatre and the threesided pillars that served as pedestals for tripods in Athens. As with the Hellenistic Tripod tomb of Knidos, influence from the Athenian complex may have been a stylistic inspiration for the Solitary obelisk. A tripod crowning of the tomb, is not impossible. Still, the analogue and contemporaneous evidence from Nikaia substantiate a pyramidion as the top ornament. Furthermore, the obelisk tombs have an inwards inclination, whereas the tripods of Athens and Knidos do not. Nevertheless, the Solitary tomb may well have had an eclectic expression, where the placing, form and stature recall the Athenian example. However, the obelisk as a tripod tomb would not weaken the hypothesis of the tomb owner as a priest of Apollo, or of an Orphic cult, since Apollo according to the myth of the dismemberment of Dionysos, buried his brother near the tripod (Robertson 2005:223-226).

Vitruvius declared that the gods under whose particular protection the state is thought to rest, ideally should be on the very highest point commanding a view of the greater part of the city. Apollo and Father Bacchus (should be) near the theatre" (Vitruvius *De Architectura*, book

I, ch. VII). If the tomb area is in fact an extension of the sanctuary's sacred space, a tomb of an Apollo priest would be appropriate on this high point, since he provided particular protection to Hierapolis. Apollo and Dionysos are central deities near and in the south theatre. The tomb as a marker of North may have entered in rites concerning advent festivals of the two gods cyclically sharing city rule between them, Apollo going to the Hyperborean north in the winter and returning from the north in the summer. The Hyperborean myth being central in Orphism, the tomb owner as an Orphic priest, would again place one or both gods near the theatre, only this time near the *north* theatre.

6.4 The tomb's immediate surroundings (immediate space)

Even though there is space for other tombs in the surrounding area of the Hierapolitan obelisk, it remains solitary. An explanation for the tomb's exclusive quality, may be that the space around the tomb was considered an extension of the sacred space of the city center and/or of the theatre, and thus a place reserved for cult of possibly both public and private character.

The Roman capitals, columns and other elements, possibly of Roman structures in the area southwest of the obelisk, are of unknown original use. Still, there is evidence that death cult was practiced by larger groups. Funerary cults – with appropriate furnishings in connection with the tomb – existed both in the east and the west of the empire (Cormack 2004:120). In Rome the trend of equipping tomb areas with appropriate facilities was strong, particularly from the 1st century AD (Hesberg 1992:16-17). This is less usual in Asia Minor. Still, we know that to some feasts connected to death cult, belonged periodical rituals like libations, flower decoration, annual coronations of images and ritual meals (Cormack 2004:111-112, 116, 120, 170, 231). On these occasions family, members of the deceased's network and/or cultic personnel, spent time at the tomb. Lykian evidence of commemorative activity connected to spaces, for example, in front of Pataran tombs, includes the presence of altars, furniture, equipment and inscriptions, which dictate that sacrificial activity be carried out (Cormack 2004:35-37; Hüllden 2005:67-72). There are also recordings of funerary gardens and tomb guardians (Cormack 2004:116,122). These gardens and guardians are also documented in Hierapolis (Ahrens 2011:103). A testament from the territory of Ephesos and an epitaph from Tralles, demonstrate considerable arrangements for persistent cult at the tomb. Lamps must have been part of the equipment for nocturnal funeral processions and in Tralles the word «torch-bearing» implies the use of light and fire as part of the rites (Cormack 2004:120). At Semnea in Kilikia, a few meters south of the afore-mentioned Opramos' tomb, a rectangular

building with *pronaos* and columns *in antis* was found. This probably belonged to the cult of the deceased (Cormack 2004:36-37, 292-293).

Although gardens with guardians are documented in Hierapolis, there is as of now no convincing evidence for proper facilities for death cult (Sven Ahrens, personal communication 2013). Nevertheless, the cult acted out at the Solitary tomb site may have had a formal quality. We know that Hierapolitan citizens with a strong relation to the Apollo cult, paid large sums to have their grave and the land belonging to it, attended to by cultic personnel. Marcus Julius Makedonikos and his wife Aelia Julia, for example, gave to the sign-bearers (*semeiaphoroi*) of Apollo Archegetes, grave-crowning funds in the amount of 7209 denarii for the tenth month and 7209 denarii for the third day of the first month (Judeich 1898:67-202, inschr.153). The sums involved in this death cult would indicate a grand procession to the tomb twice a year. In addition to Makedonikos and his wife, five other tombs have inscriptions securing a yearly grave crowning (Judeich 1898:67-202, inschr.133, 195; Miranda 1999:109-155, inscr.23; Pennacchietti 1967:287-328, inscr.23, 45). Marcus Aurelius Aegillus had left an annual sum of 144 denaria for a feast on the land beneath the tomb so that “the inheritors may enjoy themselves each year at this tomb of mine” (Pennacchietti 1967:287-328, inscr.23). Of the funerary inscriptions available, ten mention that they own the tomb and “a belonging area/surrounding place/land” (table 3). Two of these indicate gardens (Judeich 1898:67-202, inschr.218; Pennacchietti 1967:287-328, inscr.25).

6.4.1 Interpretation of the tomb owner’s identity related to immediate space

The tomb of the solitary is that of a rich man. The construction of such a tall tomb, formed like a triangular pyramid, is complicated, and the monument (most probably) drawn by an architect. The work put down in construction in such rugged terrain on the outskirts of the town, would have required quite a few workers over quite some time. This would have made it an expensive tomb.

Remnants of columns, capitals and other Roman structures found in the surroundings, may in fact not be related to the tomb, at all. Still, they may have belonged to a propylon or a columnar hall, a construction that would have entered into the cult of the tomb owner, for example like the *portico* of Opramos and other Lykian facilities. In fact many Lykian traits when it comes to regulations concerning the burial space listed by Cormack (2004:110, 132) are present in Hierapolis (Equini Schneider 1972:101; Ritti 1992-1993:42-43). Seen in this light, the possibility of the presence of facilities for a death cult, should not be excluded. The

find of the altar base in the surroundings of the obelisk tomb, further substantiates cultic activity in the tomb area.

The characteristics of being both public and private, inclusive and exclusive, apparent and secretive, may be fitting as the tomb of a priest of a mystery cult. Dichotomy is an aspect of Orphic belief (Strauss 1966:219-220), and these qualities of the Solitary tomb, may indicate such an affiliation.

6.5 The alignment and the proposed link with the Underworld (intermediate space)

The 0°- alignment, indicates an imaginary connection line between the tomb and temple C. Through mantic activity a crack in the floor of temple C served as the line of communication between the Underworld and the world of men.

The tomb, being the town's utmost marker of up versus down, and a vertical marker addressing the heavens, may be seen as a prolongation of a connection line between the Underworld and the celestial spheres, but also as a marker of direct north as seen from the sacred center.

The principle of the Axis Mundi is of it being a link between the different cosmic levels: the Underworld, the earth and Heaven. Axis Mundi represents a communication line between these levels (Henriksen 2009). Eliade calls the principle a cosmic pillar, and recognizes it in different version in all ancient religions (Eliade 1974:403-404; Hodge 2006:30).

Hierapolis was a holy city, a city of temples and ancient cultic practice, but it was also a city of contrasts. In structural anthropology meaning is created by contrasts, and phenomena acquire meaning through binary opposition (Erickson and Murphy 2008:113-116; Lévi-Strauss 1977:72-73, 142, 211). Such dual contrasts are typical of Platonic thought and Orphism (Colombo 1982 :323; Strauss 1966:219-220). In Hierapolis the life-bringing sun of Olympian Apollo contrasted the darkness of the Underworld, where only the chthonic deities and their priests mastered the deadly fumes of the Plutonion.

A *hierophant* of Samaria-Sebaste presented Olympian Helios and the chthonic Kore as manifestations of the same god, the Lord of the Universe (Magneß 2001:159-179). Sacerdos of Nikaia masters both heaven and the Underworld, having saved his country from Hades when it was cast down by earthquake, and the couples's tomb's neighbour is not Hell, but Heaven (Merkelbach and Stauber 2001:09/05/04, 07). Zeus-Hades-Sarapis of Hierapolis confirms the same holistic conception. The Orphic Apollo had uniting qualities, controlling Heaven, earth

and the Underworld: “thy piercing sight, Extends beneath the gloomy, silent night; Beyond the darkness, starry-ey'd, profound, The stable roots, deep fix'd by thee are found”
(from *The Orphic hymn to Apollo*, transl. Taylor 1824:76-77).

6.5.1 Interpretation of the tomb owner's identity related to the alignment and the proposed link with the Underworld (intermediate space)

Since the cardinal directions were important and carefully calculated for the placing of prominent buildings and monuments in ancient city planning, it is very likely that the obelisk indicates a direction linking the workings of the heavens and life on earth.

The tomb owner, or his ancestors, may have been connected with the sanctuary in the southern part of town through priesthoods, either as an Apollo priest linked with oracular activity, like the alignment to temple C may indicate, or as priest of other deities linked to the sanctuary. As pointed out above, the deities of Hierapolis were closely knit, as a family unit, alongside the imperial cult practiced in the central Apollo temple cluster. Possibly the tomb owner had a combined office, similar to that of Apollonianos, a Hierapolitan High priest of the imperial cult connected to the cult of Apollo (Ritti 2003: 196-198, 203).

To Plato the Orphica represented a mythological expression of profound philosophical truths and the Orphic Apollo was of a philosophical and all-knowing nature (McGahey 1994:48-49). For a priest of an Orphic Apollo, the position of the tomb, aligned with the sacred area where the deities controlling the contact with the Underworld were to be found, would symbolize the forces of an all-controlling god, a god uniting the underworld with the heavens.

Furthermore, to such a priest, a marker of north would be a ‘good’ marker, indicating the direction of Apollo's cyclic journey to the Hyperborean as part of the advent festivals that contributed to the continued stability and welfare of the city.

7 THE TRIANGULAR OBELISKS OF ASIA MINOR

7.1 A summary comment on the obelisk tombs of Nikaia and Hierapolis

The three obelisk tombs of Asia Minor share some qualities. Their tall stature is common to them all. Two had a pyramidion and/or decoration of gold, bronze or other metal. Two were triangular. Two were composed of Platonic solids. It is possible that the Sacerdos obelisk likewise was a tall triangular pillar. Through appearance and visibility they were all public. The Sacerdos tomb was probably intramural, the Philiskos tomb placed in open farmland close to the road to Nikomedia and the Solitary tomb had both a remarkable insight and a spectacular view. All three tomb chambers were hypogean. The obelisks give an upwards orientation, whilst the subterranean chambers add an underworldly aspect. These may be characteristics fitting of a tomb of a priest of a mystery cult, the tomb itself symbolizing an intermediate space between the underworld of the chthonic deities, the world of man and the heavens of the Olympian gods.

The tomb owners were all of the upper class, of the politico-religious elite. Merkelbach (1987:33-34) and Merkelbach and Stauber (2001:159-162) understand the inscriptions and the monumental ‘language’ of the tombs in Nikaia as manifestations of cult, rule and power. Bekker-Nielsen tentatively connects the Philiskos-tomb to political power and personal grandeur (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:112). In that respect they would have recalled the symbolical content of triumph and power of the obelisks of Rome (Curran 2009:37, 42, 44, 46-49). The Nikaian tomb owners were wealthy, Roman citizens and we know that Sacerdos contributed to the rebuilding of Nikaia after an earthquake of AD 121. Philiskos probably was both a prominent citizen of Nikaia and a wealthy landowner. Philiskos’ presumed uncle, Cassius Chrestos, was involved as agent in the proconsul’s setting up of new gates of the city wall during Vespasian’s reign, and in inscription he figured as the proconsul’s friend on the side arch (Sahin 1978:15; Bekker-Nielsen 2008:112). Like Sacerdos, this close relative of Philiskos was an ambassador, functioning as intermediary between local and imperial administration. Both Sacerdos and Cassius Chrestos had political and religious offices, and both had close ties to imperial rule. Philiskos, belonging to a family of senators, probably had important political and religious offices as well. Culturally, they seem to be part of a sophisticated and philosophically oriented elite, mastering the principles of the Second Sophistic, possessing knowledge which benefitted not only themselves, but the whole community and the empire.

The model of benefaction and piety, was confirmed as the just way to order the world, from the emperor downwards (Harland 2003:105; Price 1984:7-11, 230; Revell 2009:13). An implicit quality of those who held priestly offices and represented the towns politically, was their role as benefactors (Horster 2011:17, 202; Schörner 2007:142). This trend was remarkably strong in Asia Minor (Zuiderhoek 2009:3, 30-31, 97-98). The oracle of Klaros to Hierapolis points out the importance of benefaction: “Do not forget your benefactors. If you act like godly and pious men should act, then you will never be in a painful confusion, but be of major wealth and of better safety” (Ritti 2006:96, the author’s translation). The two Nikaian tomb owners were, from what we know, ideal citizens. Some of the citizens described in the inscriptions from Hierapolis, share the same qualities, Tiberius Iulius Myndios being the prime example: he was a High priest of Zeus, he was an ambassador to Hadrian who ensured Hierapolis the considerable sum of the *aurum coronarium* when renunciated by the emperor, and he was a considerable benefactor. By looking at the inscriptions of town, we see that benefaction was underlined as an important mark of eminence (Ritti 1985:88-89; 2003:198; 2006:144-46,181-84). Since benefaction was a prerequisite for success, career and fame, similar acts must accordingly be assumed for the owner of the Solitary, possibly connected with the north theatre.

The three tombs were all vertical markers and we know that Sacerdos’ tomb flashed back the rays of the sun, seemingly indicating a communicative ability. But Sacerdos’ tomb did not only communicate with the sun, it seemed to be part of a complete heavenly sphere. These tombs may have been meant as connection lines between man, god and cosmos, the tomb owners possessing knowledge of a cosmic nature, involving soteriological doctrines of divine judgement as reflected for example in the Platonic Myth of Er. There, a straight light, like a pillar, stretched through all Heaven and Earth, holding the spindle of Necessity which fixed the stars and all the planets in their order. In this intermediate sphere, souls were reborn, bringing back down to earth a chosen *daimon* to guide them through the coming life (Plato *The Republic* book X, 616b – 617d). We know of what seems to be such a *daimon* from the Sacerdos-inscription, and these tombs may possibly have reflected middle Platonic and/or Orphic ideas of the immortality of the soul. The upwards orientation of the monuments may indicate soul ascent, or possibly a connection between the Underworld, the world and the Heavens, the tomb owners being intermediaries between what was human and what was divine. The central idea of Hermetism, but also of other religio-philosophical affiliations like that of Middle Platonism, was the fundamental unity of God, cosmos and man, symbolized through the theosophical

triangle (Goodrick-Clarke 2008:162; van den Broeck 2000:15, 91, 94, 135-136), and it is possible to portray the Nikaian and the Hieropolitan tomb owners as contributing to such unity.

They were most probably all sacred rulers, even more so from their imperial connections. It is probable that they were part of the imperial cult in addition to their other priestly offices. Sacerdos was a Hierophant of Heaven, and similar cults for Philiskos and the Solitary tomb owner are probable. The Platonic elements and the triangular form of the Philiskos and the Solitary tomb may link them to a philosophical doctrine emphasizing the cult of a central, cosmic fire, a cult similar or identical to the Stoic and middle Platonic conviction that an intelligent fire generated eternal creation and recreation. The force of the eternal cosmic fire and the strength of cosmic light is central also in Orphism and can be connected both with Zeus and Apollo (Wypustek 2012:40-41, 47).

Like suggested above by Hermann and Triebel as a common characteristic for the owners of *tall* tomb pyramids and obelisks, they may have been sacral rulers and benefactors, who through rite and cult, in life and in death, controlled the life-giving cycles of natural produce. As protectors of the town, they would have possessed the necessary secrets to ensure prosperity, success and wealth. Their rites were seen as being vital for the identity and existence of the city, securing the safety of the community (Graf 2004:247-248, 250). As a daimon, or spirit, the sacral ruler, in death, continued to administer the life-giving cycles necessary for the welfare and the stability of society.

7.2 Concluding remarks

The triangular obelisk, placed high up above the city, close to the theatre, its alignment indicating a quality of unity and strength, would ensure the tomb owner's grandeur. His personal beliefs are unknown to us, but the form of the tomb may indicate a conviction of a philosophical kind. In that respect a tomb composed of triangles to constitute the strongest of the Platonic solids, the triangular pyramid, the element of fire, would be an image of strength. In the tomb the triangles, maybe symbolizing cosmic creation, triumphed. The tomb may have been meant as a symbol of victory over chaos, a symbol of the eternal cosmic fire.

Independently of his personal convictions, the tomb owner's memory in society was secured through the magnificence of his tomb. The choice of tomb and its symbolical content, whatever it may have been, must have convinced him that he was secured some sort of an afterlife. He could structure (Stutz 2003:322, 355-363) his posthumous legacy through choice of tomb, since the grave defines the tomb owner (Sofaer 2006:49-50). If he did not survive as an immortal soul through salvation (Burkert 1972:350-368; Trumbower 2001:8-9, 14-15, 23-

24, 121-122; Wedderburn 1982:823), at least he would remain as an eternal force in memory of man. This may have been his prime concern, since archaic man feared nothing more than to fall out of the continuous flow of time (Schweizer 2010:6).

Both Hellenistic and Roman pyramidal tombs of tall stature seem in most cases to have been connected with contemporaneous rule. As such, the probability of the owner of the solitary obelisk as part of the imperial cult increases. Unity on all administrative levels was necessary to keep the vast empire of the 2nd century AD together, and an important function of the Emperor's cult was to maintain imperial power. Members strove to uphold elitist control and to secure continued unity. Benefaction was an important mechanism which contributed greatly to such control and unity. In life the tomb owner may have been a considerable benefactor, possibly in connection with the north theatre.

Apollo as a uniting force is ideal as an instrument to political rule. The alignment may indicate a priesthood of Apollo of an Orphic inclination. As such the tomb owner may have continued his service to community in death, as an intermediary, a daimon, between divine and mortal, between the Underworld, the world and the Heavens. The inscription is missing, though, and without it, the tomb remains what it may have been meant to be, a mystery.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Aether/Aither	Personification of the highest, purest part of the atmosphere, a place between heaven and earth of a divine and fiery nature. Aether as a superior god/a divine force had the form of cosmic fire (Wypustek 2012; Cline 2011).
Analemma	Supporting or retaining outer walls for the audience seating area; more specifically, exterior walls supporting the theatron (The ancient theatre archive online).
Archon	Title of a chief magistrate holding a high office, meaning ‘ruler’ or ‘lord’ (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Aurum coronarium	A crown of gold or the equivalent sum of money offered to the emperor upon ascension to the throne (D’Andria 2003:10)
Akrotiri	In architecture; from ἄκρον, Gr. the extremity of any body. Little pedestals without bases, placed at the middle and/or at the two extremes of pediments, sometimes serving to support statues (A Dictionary of the English language online).
Apollo Kareios	He is an assimilation between the local divinity Kareios and the Hellenistic Apollo (Ritti 1985:137)
Apollo Lairbenos	The Hierapolitan Apollo was a strict patron deity, but especially the rural Apollo Lairbenos-sanctuary had the character of a punitive sanctuary. It was part of the territory of Hierapolis at least from the early 3rd century onward (Thonemann 2011:157; Thonemann 2013:91). Many expiation texts come from this hilltop sanctuary, where Apollo Lairbenos sat as judge (Price:96; Thonemann 2011:157; Thonemann 2013:91,161, n.61). He received apologies, gave sentences and took fines from those who had committed impure and immoral acts (Miller 1985:60-67).
Asylum/asylia	A privilege of honour and status granted to temples, which were in some way considered special. Perhaps original meaning: inviolability of shrines. These were places of safety, a refuge which offered special protection and enjoyed special privileges (A complete dictionary of the Greek and Roman antiquities; The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Bomos	An elevated place. Very often a raised place on which to offer a sacrifice, an altar. Plural: bomoi (The New Testament Greek Lexicon).
Boulé	City Council with a day-to-day responsibility for the state/city affairs (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012)
Bothros	A hole or pit for libations to the nether gods. In mantic activity a point of communication (The Oxford encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome, Oxford University Press, 2010).
Calendrial system of festivals	The calendar system of different cities and deities is confusing (Kerenyi 1996:233), but the content of the festivals was similar, despite slight differences in date (See Graf 2009: 76; Sourvinou-Inwood 2005 Hylas: 157; Fontenrose 1959:383; Braswell 1988:66; Robertson 2009:101-104, Kerenyi 1996: 206). Some calendars speak of Apollo’s return from the Hyperboreans at the rising of Sirius, in summer (See Kerenyi 1996:233).
Cerberus	Monstrous hound who guards the entrance to the Underworld. Hesiod makes him a child of Echidna and Typhon (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Codice topografico della città di Roma	Description of the fourteen ancient Roman regions (Valentini e Zucchetti 1940)
Cursus honorum	Sequential order of public offices held (career path), in many cases listed on tomb stones as part of the funerary inscription (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Diazoma	The diazoma of the Greek theater is one of several passages that divided the theatron (seating area) into its upper and lower sections (see Theatre in The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Drama mysticon	Dramatic representation of mythical narrative (The Oxford Classical Dictionary, 4th ed., 2012). An acting out of myth in a cultic drama. Particularly a cultic reenactment of the rape of Persephone and the subsequent search for her by Demeter (and her followers Hekate and Iacchos). A fertility rite (Sourvinou-Inwood 2005:30, 35, 38-40)
Euergetism	Neologism of French scholarship (<i>évergétisme</i> , from εὐεργέτης, ‘benefactor’/one who does good deeds) to describe the socio-political phenomenon of voluntary gift-giving to the community (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012). An ancient practice of high-status and wealthy individuals in society (euergetes) who in return received political support, honorary statues etc.
Gerusia	A council of the wealthy elders (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).

In Antis	Columns in antis are columns between two antae. The anta is the end of a wall decorated by a pilaster (Encyclopaedia Britannica)
Middle Platonism	Platonism of the period between BC 68 – AD 205) characterized by an advance towards a comprehensive metaphysics (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Nefesh	Semitic obelisk or pyramid tomb monument in stone. The stone is animated and represents the deceased. Pyramidal nefesh symbolize a concept of soul ascent (Triebel 2004: 252-258)
Obelisk	A tapering stone pillar with a square cross section, terminating in a pointed or pyramidal top (Oxford dictionary of English 2010).
Panhelleneion/ Panhellenia	Athens-based organization of eastern cities, founded by emperor Hadrian in 131/2, but probably not fully operational before 137, designed to unite the Greek-speaking cities of the empire in the consciousness of their past and culture. Chief concerns were the Panhellenia, the cult and festival of its deified founder and the worship of Demeter at Eleusis (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Plateia/stenopoi	Plateia: wide road, street. Stenopoi: narrower sidestreets (www.biblehub.com/greek).
Plutonium	Plutonia marked entrances to the Underworld (Strabo 5.244; The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Pronaos	Latin, from Greek. The outer part of an ancient Greek temple forming a portico immediately in front of the cella and delimited by the front wall of the cella and the columns or the antae and columns (m-w.com)
Portico	Colonnaded porch or entrance to a structure (<i>Concise Encyclopedia</i>). Possible translation of the Greek stoa. Extended (free-standing) colonnades which are simply stoas erected in a Roman context (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Prytaneion	Symbolic centre of the polis, housing its communal hearth, eternal flame, and public dining-room where civic hospitality was offered. Usually in or off the agora (area where people gather together) (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Pyramid	To the Greeks, the <i>puramis</i> was a monumental structure with a square or triangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top (Oxford dictionary of English 2010). During the Medieval ages (Old French), the term <i>pyramide</i> comprised obelisks and/or stelae (Online etymology dictionary). The geometrical description is a polyhedron having for its base a polygon, and for faces triangles with a common vertex (m-w.com).
Python / (Apollo)	PYTHON was a monstrous serpent which Gaia (Mother Earth) appointed to guard the oracle at Delphi. The beast was sometimes said to have been born from the rotting slime left behind after the great Deluge. When Apollo laid claim to the shrine, he slew the dragon with his arrows. The oracle and festival of the god were then named Pytho and Pythian from the rotting (pythō) corpse of the beast. According to some, Apollo slew the monster to avenge his mother Leto, who had been pursued relentlessly by the dragon during her long pregnancy. Python was variously described as a male or female drakon. The Homeric Hymn to Apollo (and some Greek art) equates her with Ekhidna, a woman-headed serpent or drakaina, which nursed and consorted with the monstrous giant Typhoeus (www.theoi.com). Myth saw the foundation of Apollo cult as a primordial event, expressing it in the theme of dragon-slaying (Hymn. Hom. Ap. 287-374; (See Apollo in The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Scaenae frons	The background of the theatre stage increasingly ornate with the addition of columns, niches, and statues decorating up to three stories of architecture (The ancient theatre archive; see theatre in The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Second sophistic	Ca. AD 60-230 when declamation became the most prestigious literary activity in the Greek world. A revival and recovery of Greek economy, culture and politics. A return to Hellenic culture (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Sarapis	The hellenized form of Egyptian Osiris-Apis, the hypostasis of Osiris and of Apis-bulls entombed at Saqqara (Plut. <i>De Is. Et Os.</i> 29, 362 cd; The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).
Tetrahedron	A triangular pyramid, the first of the Platonic solids, from which the other solids are formed. The Philiskos and the Solitary tombs are tetrahedrons resembling obelisks. In the <i>Timaeus</i> , Plato equated the tetrahedron with the "element" of fire (http://mathworld.wolfram.com/PlatonicSolid.html)
Theatron	(latin: cavea) 'Place of seeing'/'watching place'. Gallery where spectators looked at sacrifices, dances or theatrical performances (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012). In Cassius Dio's <i>Epitome</i> 68.27.3, theatron is used to refer to a gallery constructed to allow spectators to look down into a pit of vapors. He refers to the Plutonium in Hierapolis as such a place (69.27.3)
The Timaeus	Work by Plato. In the <i>Timaeus</i> Plato presents an elaborately wrought account of the formation of the universe. Plato is deeply impressed with the order and beauty he observes in the universe, and

his project in the dialogue is to explain that order and beauty. The universe, he proposes, is the product of rational, purposive, and beneficent agency. It is the handiwork of a divine Craftsman (“Demiurge,” *dēmiourgos*, 28a6), who, imitating an unchanging and eternal model, imposes mathematical order on a preexistent chaos to generate the ordered universe (*kosmos*). the beautiful orderliness of the universe is also the model for rational souls to understand and to emulate. Such understanding and emulation restores those souls to their original state of excellence, a state that was lost in their embodiment. There is, then, an explicit ethical and religious dimension to the discourse. (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. First published Tue Oct 25, 2005; substantive revision Wed Mar 13, 2013)

Typhon

Typhoeus (or Typhon) was a monstrous immortal storm-giant who was defeated and imprisoned by Zeus in the pit of Tartaros. He was the source of devastating storm winds which issued forth from that dark nether realm (www.theoi.com; The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).

Religious, political and honorary offices

Agonothetes

Magistrate in charge of the *Agones* (athletic and artistic contests with associated festivals). The Agonothetes was expected to contribute significantly towards the costs of his office. An office often combined with other prestigious offices (see *agones* in The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).

Archiereus

An archiereus is a chief or high priest of the temple connected to the imperial cult (Sahin 1978:17; Bekker-Nielsen 2008:83). Often combined with other offices.

Asiarch

Title of life-long pol./rel. office directly linked with the Emperor’s cult. Closely related to the term Archiereus (priesthood) (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:83-84).

Bithyniarch

Closely related to the terms Archiereus and Asiarch (priesthood of Bithynia) (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:83-86)

Septemviri epulones / Board of Seven

was a priestly collegiate in Rome who arranged public feasts. One of the four major religious colleges/corporations of ancient Roman priests (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).

Defensor Civitatis

The *defensor civitatis* (or “defender of the municipality”) was an important judicial office in the later Roman Empire (The encyclopedia of ancient history. Published Online: 26 OCT 2012)

Hierophant

A hierophant is an interpreter of sacred mysteries and secret principles and the word simply means ‘the one who shows what is holy’ (Robertson 2010: 91; Herodot *The Histories* 7.153.2).

Praetor

Roman magistracy ranking below consul (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).

Presbys

A presbys had highly specific ambassadorial missions (Hamilton 14), where being elderly and of experience was a prerequisite. Further, rhetorical skills was a need for such a diplomatic office (Bekker-Nielsen 2008:112)

Sacerdos

Latin for priest (latin-dictionary.org)

Sebastophant

The term ‘sebastophant’ is built on the analogy of the ‘hierophant’ of the mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis and of *sebastos* which is the Greek term for the title *augustus*. Like the hierophant revealed sacred objects, the sebastophant was involved in imperial mysteries, through sacred actions and for example the revelation of imperial statues in festival processions (Friesen 2001:222).

Tribuni plebis / Tribune of the People

An official in ancient Rome chosen by the *plebeians* (commoners) to protect their interests. Officers of the plebs (The Oxford classical dictionary, 4th ed., 2012).